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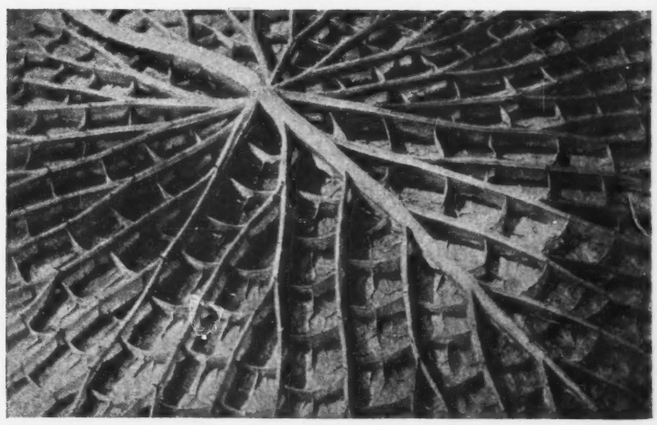

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THE
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
A Magazine of Architecture & Decoration

Vol. LXXXI, No. 482 January 1937

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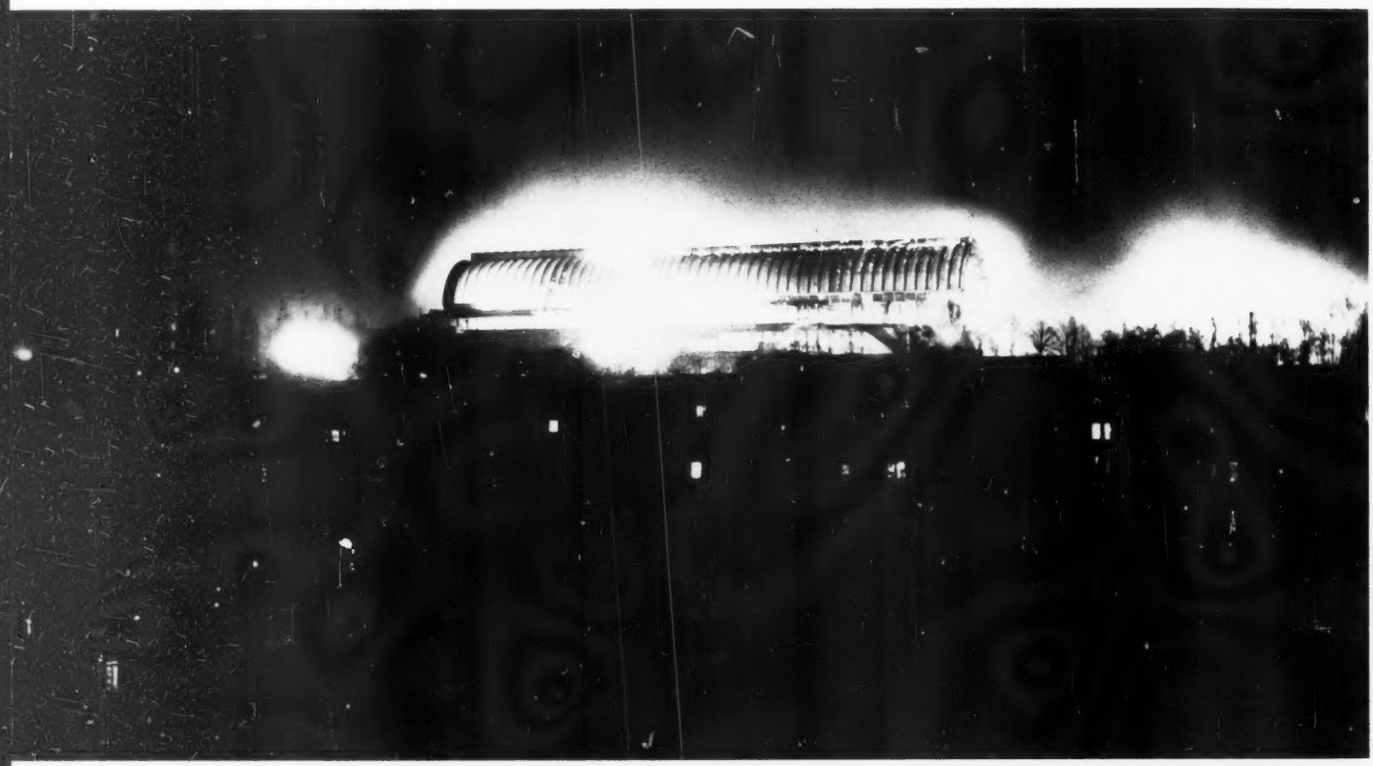


The Crystal Palace has staged its final and most splendid pyrotechnical display. Besides marking the disappearance of a very familiar London landmark, its destruction is also, to those who understand its significance, an architectural tragedy. A brief obituary notice of the building is printed opposite. Next month it is hoped to make a longer assessment of its importance, not as part of the Victorian scene, but strictly architecturally, as an original contribution to the evolution of modern architecture.

PLATE i. *January* 1937

OBITUARY

On the night of November 30th the Crystal Palace was destroyed by fire. To the mass of Londoners that meant a free exciting spectacle, one that kept crowds surging about Sydenham Hill till the early hours of the morning. It meant also the destruction of a very familiar landmark, but a landmark that they perhaps felt was already doomed to go the way the monuments of another age gradually do go. They were sorry to see this one go because of its sentimental associations, and the sentimental memories it helped to preserve—of festive childhood occasions in the particular and of Victorian life in the general. They had a rather patronizing regard for it, as a survival from a quaint inexplicable age, that took itself over-seriously and foolishly expected a centre of popular education on Sydenham Hill, designed for "the exhibition of monuments of art in unbroken symmetry: and the productions of nature in unthwarted growth" to be a business proposition. Even the name, Crystal Palace, suggests the public attitude—of admiration strongly tinged with ridicule.

To architects, on the other hand, the fire is a tragedy. Those who have studied the history of the modern architectural movement realize how much it owes to the experimental engineers of the nineteenth century, who, returning to the fundamental regard of design as structure, concentrating on the bridging of large spaces economically and precisely, gave the impulse to a fresh examination of the conventions of style and taste. More important, in using their own structural innovations so logically and so precisely, they helped to establish feeling for a new æsthetic which derives from a dehumanized scale and from structure divorced from handicraft. Their monuments were not without exception inspired examples of architectural art: but, regarded historically, they were inspired landmarks on the map of the new territories their designers helped to explore. The Crystal Palace was an imposing though not a wholly great piece of architecture. Abstractly its best quality was a logic that transcended poverty of plastic imagination. Its great significance was in the method as well as the manner of its construction. Not only was it one of the earliest and most courageous examples of the nineteenth century's superhuman exhibition halls in iron and glass, but it was the first important exploitation of another characteristic of modern architecture—mass production. In designing his building of standardized pre-fabricated units, Paxton took a vital step into the epoch in which we are only now establishing ourselves with any confidence.

The biographical details about the Crystal Palace are too well known to need describing anyhow but briefly, even in an obituary notice.

Joseph Paxton's design for a building to house the Great Exhibition of 1851 was accepted after two hundred and fifty designs, by two hundred and fifty architects, had been rejected, and after the project for the exhibition was on the point of being abandoned, so great was the public outcry against the prospect of a large brick building in Hyde Park. Paxton asked for nine days to work out his idea in detail. (He had already employed the principle in his glasshouses for the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth). His design was finally accepted with the support of Robert Stephenson the railway engineer. It took seven months to build and was completed in time for the exhibition without any of the mishaps its critics had anticipated. Its success earned its designer a knighthood. When the Great Exhibition was finished a company was formed to erect the building again, to house a permanent exhibition and popular museum on Sydenham Hill. It was demolished and (the pre-fabricated nature of its construction allowing) re-erected in an enlarged form. Queen Victoria performed the opening ceremony in 1854. At Sydenham it had a various career. The enterprise that established it there was a failure, but it housed subsequently an immense variety of activities and occasions. During the war of 1914–1918 it became a naval depot, being temporarily rechristened *H.M.S. Victory VI*. At one time almost derelict, it was saved from possible demolition in 1922 and acquired for the nation. Subsequently its function was to house the strangest mixture of contests and festivities: band competitions, boxing matches, cat shows, organ recitals; and, most notably, the weekly firework displays on Thursdays in the summer.

On the latter occasions, on fine summer nights, it recaptured in some degree its Victorian glory. When the sunset sky shone faintly through the huge glass mass of the palace, and in the prim Victorian pleasure garden small black figures moved in and out of the smoke and gave to the building itself a fantastic scale that enhanced its already unreal appearance, it achieved again something of the innocent gay aspect in which it is depicted in Victorian prints. That was the especial occasion of pilgrimage for those who valued it for its Victorian associations. They strolled among the fantastic sculptures of antediluvian beasts and poked their way into the sad architectural courts. Now it has disappeared in a last splendid pyrotechnical display. All the sentimental nostalgic aspect of the public's regret was summed up in the *Manchester Guardian's* heading to an article on its destruction: "Brock's Last Benefit."

However, rather than a relic of a past age the Crystal Palace was a forerunner of a future one. Ruskin, when he declared, in deriding it, that "the first principles of architectural sublimity . . . are found all the while to have consisted merely in sparkling and in space" prophesied better than he knew. Recently, at least among foreigners and historians, the Crystal Palace had come into its own as an architectural monument. It has been visited by the distinguished architects of the whole continent of Europe.

We can perhaps console ourselves a little for its loss by remembering that, finally, its importance was that it was actually built—the technical achievement of its erection is the monument to its designer's vision. It has gone the way of De Dion's Paris exhibition hall of 1878, of Cottancin's *Galerie des Machines* for the Paris Exhibition of 1889, and of Paxton's own Great Conservatory at Chatsworth. It stood to remind us that we did contribute something to the pioneer efforts of the Modern Movement. Now it is gone there is nothing we in this country can point to and say "there is a building that faced all the tests, of time, of use and of critical opinion, that a work of architectural art is subject to, and survived." Once more modern architecture in England is only experimental.

J. M. RICHARDS.

Pictures in Schools

By J. E. Barton

SUITABLE building and equipment of schools — schools with some character of external dignity and internal serenity, offering a background for cultural influence as distinct from scholastic instruction — is now an affair of first-class importance. The more enlightened local authorities have begun to realize that the eye-education of every child, for good or for evil, goes on through every hour of the day. It is not disposed of by a provision of art rooms and art teachers, even if we assume (what is not always true) that the outlook of the art teaching itself is wise and sensible. What matters is the pervading atmosphere of the school as a whole. In the visual surroundings of their home life the bulk of our children are far from fortunate. They are brought up in a chaos of crowded space, discordant or depressing colour, and pretentious but meaningless shapes. Almost every idea or convention they pick up casually, with regard to man-made beauty or ugliness, is fundamentally wrong, because it bears no relation either to universal truth or to functional common sense. All the more reason why our schools must try to provide some glimmering of better standards for young minds, thus innocently perverted from infancy.

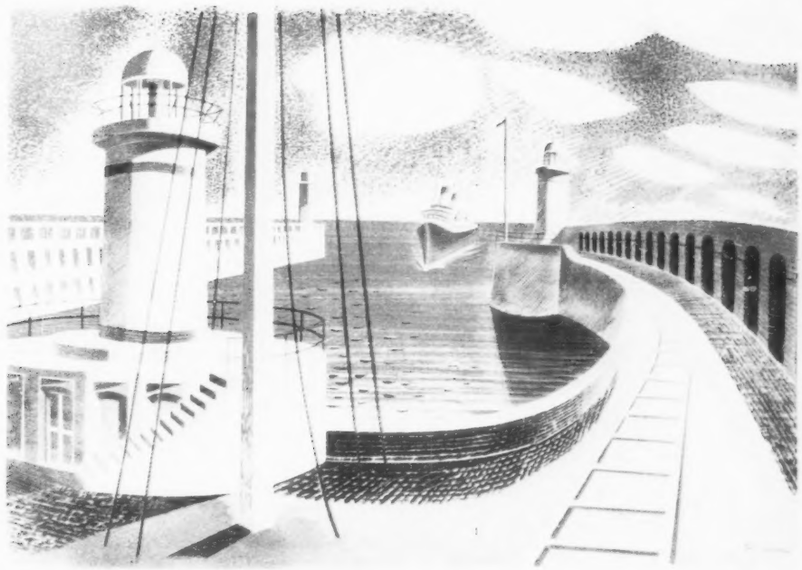
I happen to know that the topic of school pictures is very much alive just now in the minds of many teachers, inspectors, and administrators. Schools of every grade have pictures of some sort on the walls of their classrooms and assembly halls, but usually there is next to no evidence of thought or principle in their choice and arrangement. The majority are miscellaneous gifts from well-disposed but ill-instructed persons, vaguely moved by a belief that pictures of any type, so long as they are harmless in subject-matter, and readily identifiable as images of nature by the meanest intelligence, will relieve the austerity of school routine. When a young lady correspondent invited Ruskin to help her in brightening the homes of the poor by a free picture scheme —she told him she had already thought of prints after Fra Angelico—he replied that the poor liked pictures of hungry beggars on doorsteps, sick children starving in bed, and Queen Victoria opening Parliament. He added that they must above all be coloured, and offered to send her some coloured birds. It would be harsh to say that in its attitude to pictorial art our teaching profession is still on a level with Ruskin's poor. But it is strictly true that in any number of schools, whether from ignorance, or apathy, or the prevailing shyness of making a move in any realm where safety has not been guaranteed by an official syllabus, the authorities continue to acquiesce in a bewilderingly feeble average of wall pictures. School literature has gone some way since the Victorian age. No teacher of English would be permitted to hold up Mrs. Felicia Hemans or Miss Adelaide Ann Procter as adequate illustrations of the national muse. Yet, compared with the standard of what in many schools is still framed and hung up for children to look at, the versicles of those two estimable ladies are emotionally powerful and intellectually severe.

Anybody who has given thought to the matter will agree that a diet of indiscriminate visual anecdote is not less enervating to the mind than a course of trumpery fiction or flaccid verse. But the problem is easier to see than to solve. Consider only two facts: the fact that the vast majority of children have never seen one really important original painting, and the fact that in these days no untaught person is aware that painters, in all coherent ages of art, are subordinate to architectural schemes. Municipal galleries steadfastly decline to go to the trifling expense of maintaining a collection of large-scale colour reproductions from old and modern masterpieces. The need has been preached for years, and allowing for all shortcomings in any reproductive process, there is no doubt that an intelligently organized use of such material would offer some glimpse of pictorial evolution and background to thousands of people who could profit by it. The only art recognized by the committees of provincial galleries—I don't say by their directors, whose freedom of action is usually curtailed in exact proportion to the committee's inexperience and ignorance—is the art of diplomaed mediocrity in gilt-framed oil-paintings. If our children had only to start from zero, it would not matter so much. As things are, the art institutions to which most of them are limited can be relied on to inculcate positively false values from the outset. It is a paradox of English municipal life that so immense a gulf divides the art gallery from the public library. The library, more and more, offers a free choice of the best things to all comers. The art gallery, so far from being a help to pictorial education of the masses, is often a most serious hindrance, because it perpetuates a standpoint (or rather a lack of standpoint)

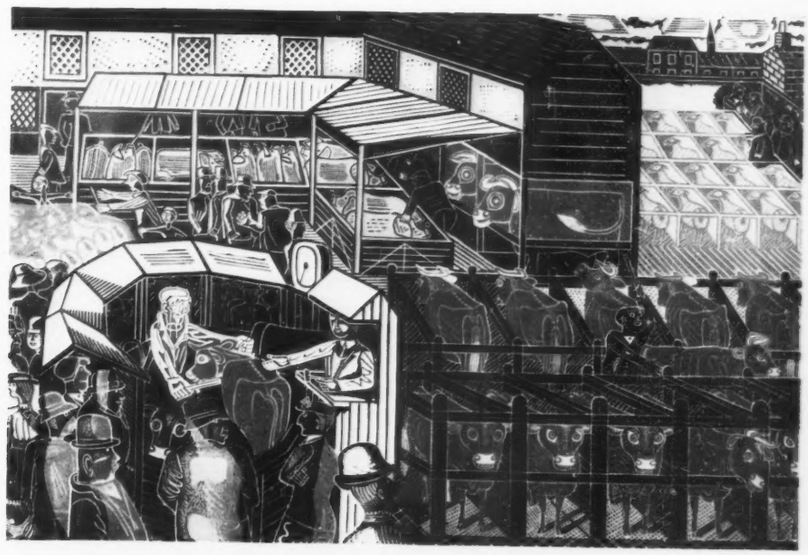
Here are reproduced in miniature the first series of ten coloured lithographs by modern artists issued by "Contemporary Lithographs," designed to provide pictures for schools that will at the same time contribute live contemporary art for the school-child to see, and live wall-decoration for school interiors. Mr. Barton, in his article, discusses the importance of proper consideration of the school interior as a factor in education. The size of the actual lithographic prints is 32 ins. by 23 ins.

LITHOGRAPHS FOR SCHOOLS

NORAH McGUINNESS
Fisherman's Beach



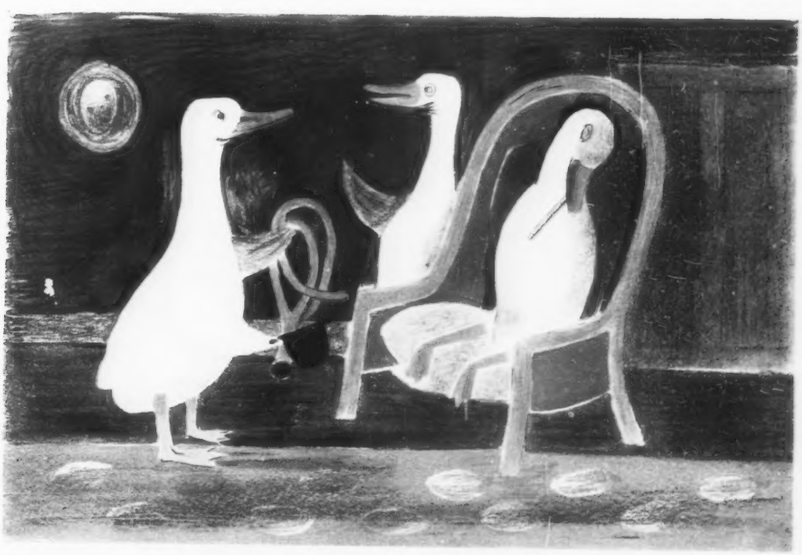
ERIC RAVILIOUS
Newhaven Harbour



EDWARD BAWDEN
Cattle Market

CLIVE GARDINER
Buckinghamshire Farm

PAUL NASH
Landscape with Megaliths



GRAHAM SUTHERLAND
The Sick Duck

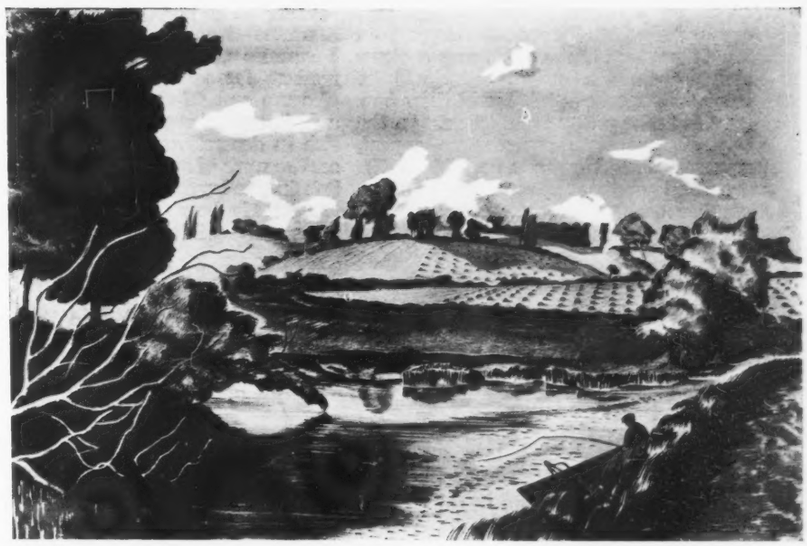
which came into being at a time when pictorial culture had sunk to the lowest phase recorded in history.

Most schools thus being thrown on their own resources, what principles should guide us in choosing school pictures? I suggest the first requisite, for children as for adults, is pictorial quality. Every school must have maps, diagrams, illustrations for science and nature study, and the like, which are outside our discussion. Historical subjects and literary legends bring us to a dangerous borderland. Commercial exploiters of scholastic weaknesses are prepared to deluge our schools with highly-coloured versions of King John signing Magna Charta, or Luther preaching. Such things are often perpetrated in a series, and it is not uncommon to see them devastating long stretches of wall or corridor. It is arguable that the medieval crowd learned scripture from wall-paintings, so why shouldn't modern children study history in a similar way? The answer is that all the circumstances are different. Lettered children can get all they need in the way of such illustrations from books. Moreover, church paintings in their good period were part of an ordered unity. There is no sense of proportion in permanently furnishing school walls with æsthetically trivial, if not actually depraving, reminders of historic episodes. Legends and fairy lore, supposed to be suitable for the very young, are more perilous still. The gnomes and elves and ornamental toadstools, now sold in painted composition or metal for the enlivenment of suburban villa gardens, are far more respectable than the pictorial nursery rubbish so often imposed on the infant eye.

Must we then stick severely to photographs or colour collotypes of works by established artists? Even here some danger lurks. Many of us gladly use such reproductions, and it is reassuring to know that many schools are admitting the more modern examples now available. Children of our day find more exhilaration in the direct colour and summarized forms of modern painting than in the more subdued charms of the eighteenth-century school, or the ecclesiastical art of the old masters. The vision of a Renoir, a Matisse, or a Paul Nash is in tune with what children intuitively feel to be the spirit of their own age. Nevertheless, there is the drawback that pictures are slow in winning their way to large-size reproduction. Some note of prestige is inevitable by the time a painting is thus popularized, and the whole realm of art is so corrupted by prestige-bias that it is far from easy to encourage the first-hand response to new experience, for its own sake, which is the essence of spontaneous art enjoyment. Good posters are one resource. Where funds are very short, it would be quite a sound idea to limit school pictures (in our present sense) to a really discriminating selection of poster art. The first-class poster, at any rate, is compatible with architectural harmony in the modern classroom, and offers a good starting-point from which the child may be led on to appreciate pictorial design.

To these suggestions, none of them free from perplexity, we must now add a highly interesting new experiment, which is the occasion of this article. A publishing company, Contemporary Lithographs, Ltd., is issuing for schools a batch of ten colour lithographs by contemporary artists, in a size that is suitable for wall decoration, and at a price which no school authority could think excessive. The designs are drawn on the stone by the artists themselves, and it will at once be apparent that here is a form of art which enjoys a more living connection between artist and spectator than is possible in any facsimile type of reproduction. A lithograph of this kind has the advantage of being at once an original work, and a work that lends itself to publication in numbers which favour a commercial price. The dimensions too are practically uniform: another point of importance, if proper disposition on the school-room wall is duly considered, as it should be.

In this first series, which they hope to follow with other issues of a broadly similar aim, the publishers have primarily had in view what is likely to suit infants' schools and kindergartens. The attractiveness and merit of the prints are undeniable, and it may be possible to draw some useful deductions from the way in which they are received. The publishers are wise in beginning with art that has plenty of concrete human interest. It would be absurdly dogmatic to assert that children will not respond to abstract design, seeing that much of the best abstract design in the world has been created by peoples who were in the child-stage of evolution. But for children who have been habituated to pictures that tell a story, and tell it cheaply, it was the right thing to supply a descriptive art whose good formal qualities can be imbibed unconsciously. It will be evident to the reader, when he looks at the small illustrations of the prints which accompany this article, that in choice of subject two groups are discernible. In the one, the artists have gone to the universal world for pictorial interests which presumably children may share with their elders.



JOHN NASH — Thames near Oxford

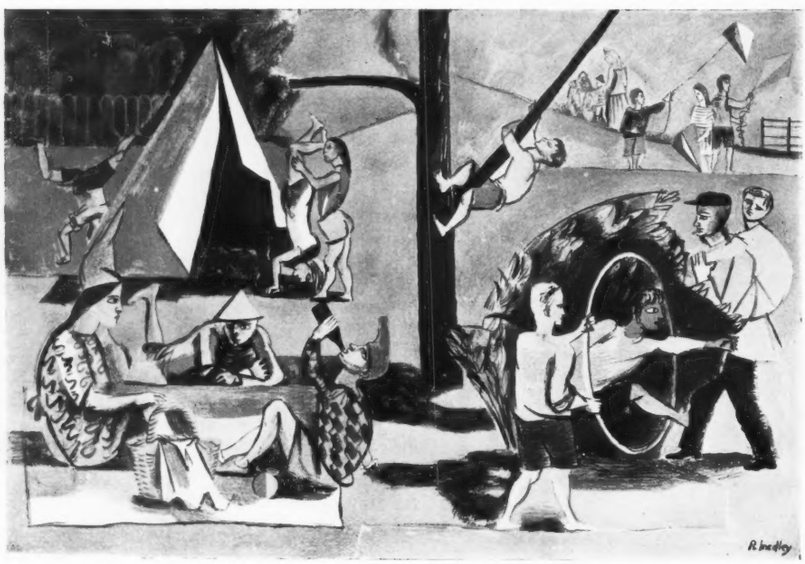
BARNETT FREEDMAN — Charade

In the other, there has been a direction of the design into anecdotal channels, on the assumption that in this way a closer approach to the child's mind will be gained. Experience alone will show how far this latter policy is judicious. In the way of immediate and surface appeal, no doubt something may be said for the anecdotal choice. I am not so sure whether it will best serve, in the long run, our ultimate aim of purging the youthful vision and restoring a love of noble simplicity.

On the face of it, you might say there is nothing specifically for children in the distinguished print by Eric Ravilious of *Newhaven Harbour*, with its imaginative composition, charmingly "lithographic" colour, and more than a touch of Chirico-ish power. But I am sure that any sensitive child, exposed to the influence of such pictures in exchange for the messy sentimentalism of so much that he sees, would in time be educated by them. On the other hand, while Edward Bawden's *Cattle Market* is obviously more juvenile in theme, I surmise that many a child with an instinct for line and pattern will get pleasure and stimulus from poring upon a design so interestingly schematized, and rich in decorative ideas. So long as we see the work of an artist in a happy mood, it is folly to lay down the law, or determine too strictly how far the invitation of a picture to children should be bold, or detailed.

The choice of lithography as the medium has entirely justified itself. Barnett Freedman's *Charade* has the freedom and range of treatment that mark the accomplished craftsman on stone. Both *Fisherman's Beach*, by Norah McGuinness, and *Buckinghamshire Farm*, by Clive Gardiner, are satisfying achievements. The beach, with its boat, conforms admirably to the grainy technique which in a good lithograph is sensuously agreeable; and the farm is not only well put together, but has a rustic opulence of colour, such as a child might imagine. There is dramatic force in Paul Nash's *Landscape with Megaliths*, and English tranquility pervades John Nash's *Thames near Oxford*. The other three subjects —*In the Park*, by Robert Medley, *Bears at Tea*, by H. S. Williamson, and *The Sick Duck*, by Graham Sutherland—all show freshness in their colour schemes and a break from conventional handling. With a more direct appeal to young children prominent in their aims, the work of the artists is unavoidably more experimental. They have not been able to fall back, like the others, on phases of the visual world to which their personal tastes are addicted.

I have tried not to emphasize a personal suspicion that art which is good for the bulk of simple-minded people will also be good art for children, and that pictures, like poetry, are most effective when they are built round such common aspects of experience as come home to all ages alike. By all means let us explore the possibilities of specific child-interest in art. But we must not ask the artist to assume a child-like standpoint: least of all, a child-like technique. Remarkable work is done in the art-rooms of modern schools, but in some quarters there is a tendency to over-estimate the happy accidents of line and colour which quite young children often bring off. Modernistic school mistresses are especially prone to advocate a romantic "freedom" both in execution and in taste, relying on instinct and intuition to break new ground and to reach undreamed-of heights. For this foible there is one remedy: a solid and gruelling course of study in the co-operative architecture of great ages, including our own. Pictures are only one component in the design of civilized living. What we seek today is a unified cosmos. Individuality can be trusted to appear in the work of any genuine artist. The present need in pictorial art is not so much the assertion of an original outlook as the ability to embody the modern constructive attitude in forms that are intelligible to all intelligent people. Isolated sensibilities are less important than the power to see and state ordinary things in terms that express the common aspirations of a whole society which is striving to be born. For our children, who are growing up in this ferment, the good school picture may be defined as one that makes a bridge between the nature they love and the architecture they have yet to learn. When such pictures are produced in adequate numbers, most of our schools will have to be rebuilt to contain them.



ROBERT MEDLEY — **In the Park**

H. S. WILLIAMSON — **Bears at Tea**

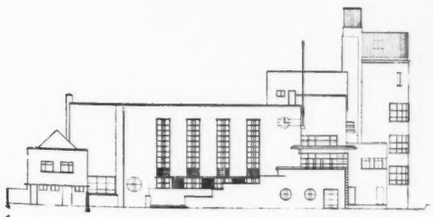
THREE LONDON SCHOOLS

BURLINGTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, HAMMERSMITH.

SIR JOHN BURNET, TAIT AND LORNE, ARCHITECTS

In his article (on the preceding pages) Mr. J. E. Barton refers to the importance of the child's visual environment as a factor in education, and it has often been suspected that all kinds of confusion of taste and cultural maladjustments manifested in his later life, can be attributed to the chaos of art and near-art with which a man is surrounded as a child. Mr. Barton was concerned particularly with pictures, used as example and decoration, in schools, but he realizes that the pictures—the part—can only seriously be considered in relation to the whole. He says, indeed, that: "Suitable building and equipment of schools—schools with some character of external dignity and internal serenity, offering a background for cultural influence as distinct from scholastic instruction—is now an affair of first-class importance."

There are signs that the public, and those who serve the public by ordering the building of their schools, are now beginning to realize that this is an affair of first-class importance. Interest is alive in the good and rational design of schools, the *News Chronicle* has initiated a competition for the design of a modern school, Walter Gropius, whose knowledge and experience we have been so slow to take advantage of, is being given his first great opportunity in this country in the task of designing a village-community school in Cambridgeshire. Finally, on this and the nine following pages are illustrated three schools recently completed in or near London, of different types as regards



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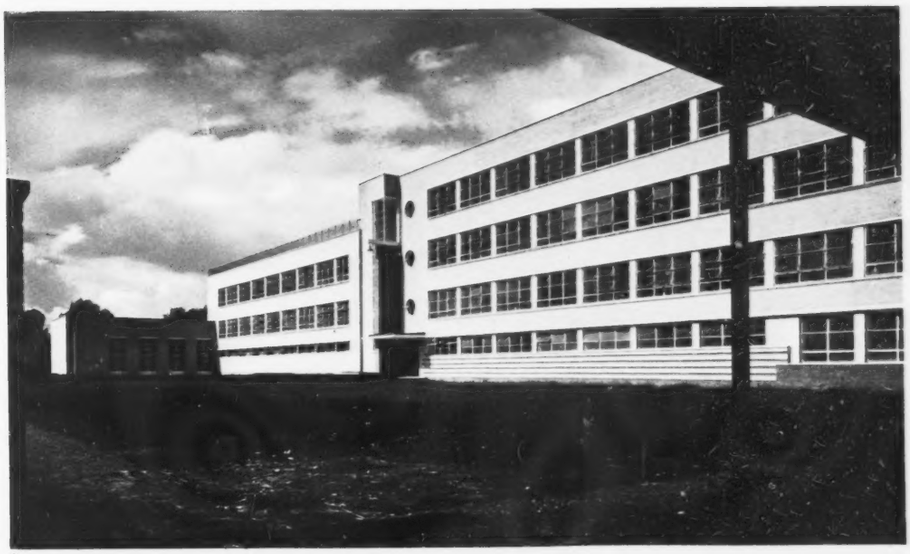

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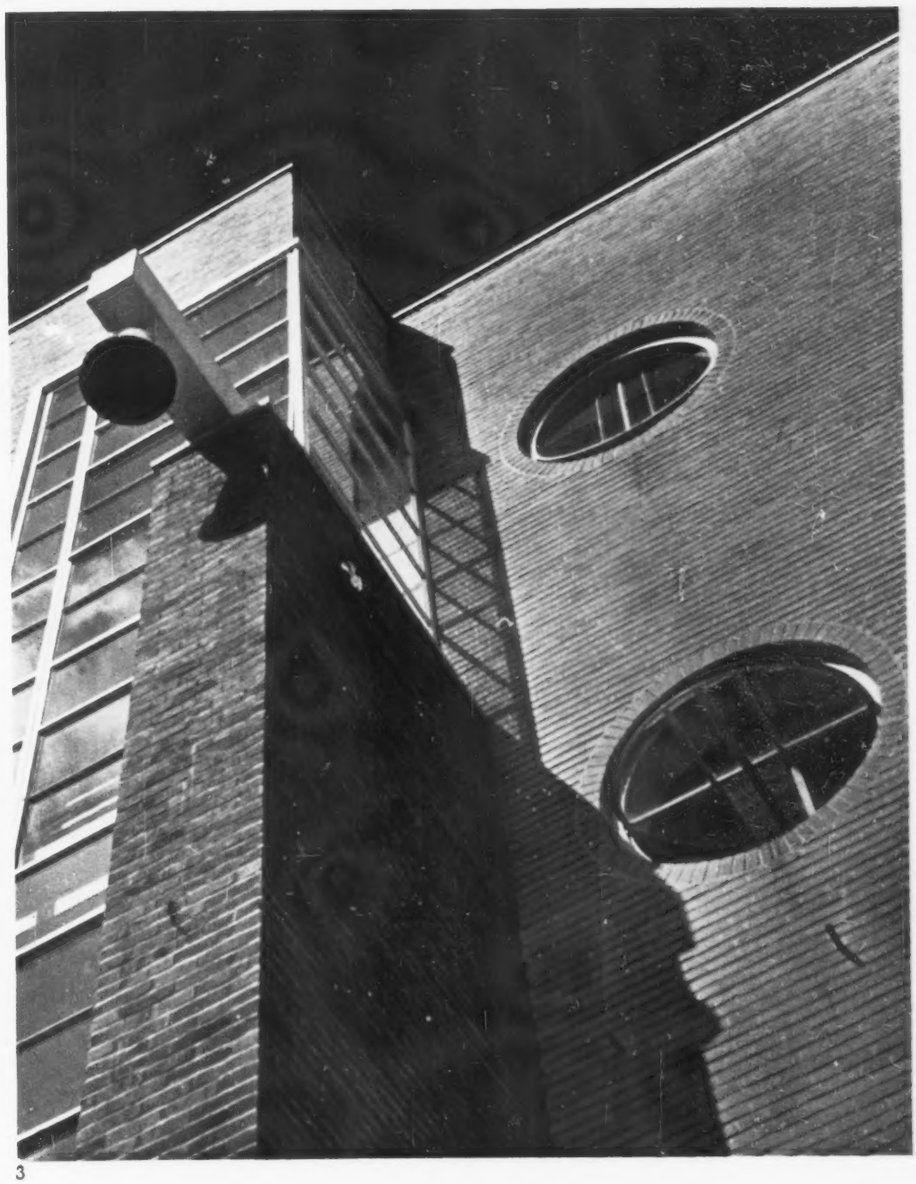

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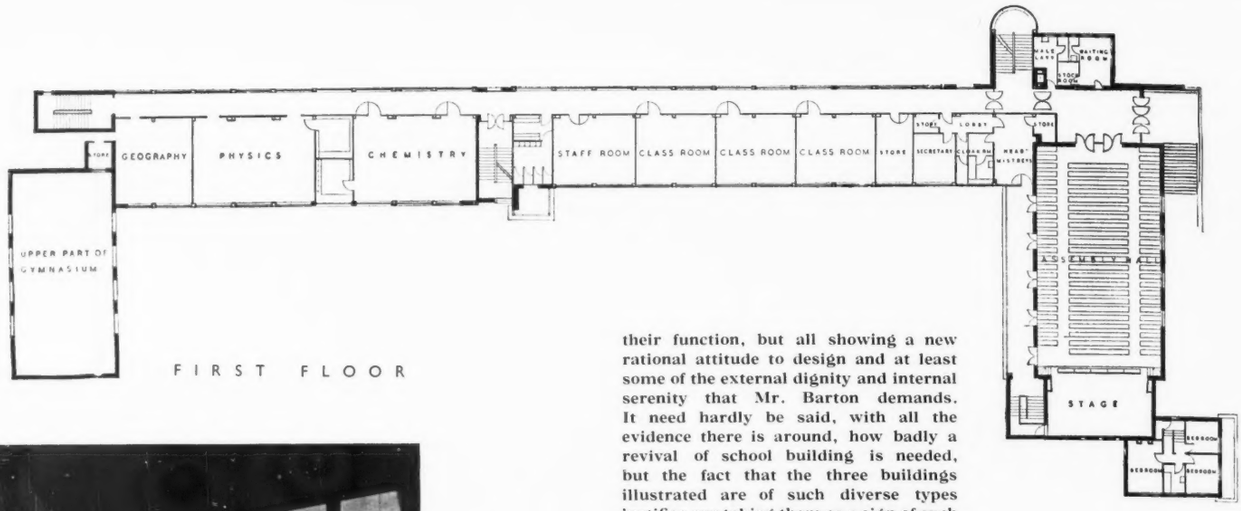


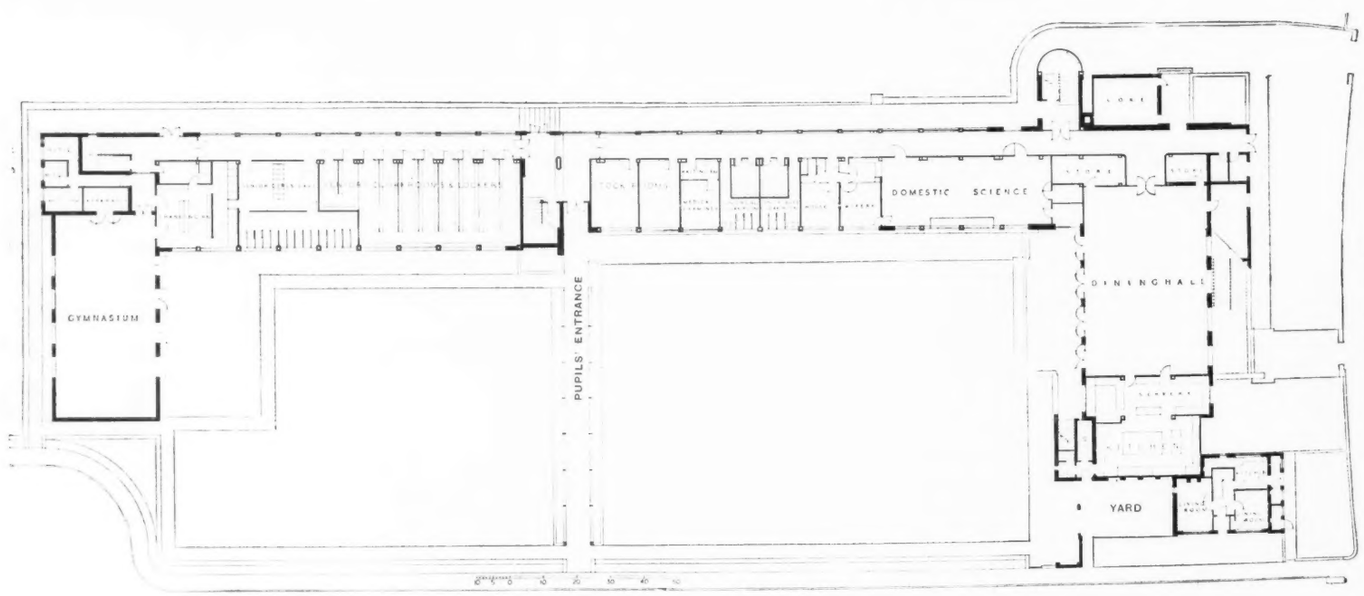
FIRST FLOOR

4

their function, but all showing a new rational attitude to design and at least some of the external dignity and internal serenity that Mr. Barton demands. It need hardly be said, with all the evidence there is around, how badly a revival of school building is needed, but the fact that the three buildings illustrated are of such diverse types justifies our taking them as a sign of such a revival in the form of a growing public movement, not merely as the result of occasional or local private inspiration.

The first school is a secondary one, originally founded in 1699 through the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. It is actually the oldest girls' school in London. The original building was in Carnaby Street. In 1725 a new site was obtained in Boyle Street and a school-house erected to the designs of Colin Campbell. In 1905 it was reorganized to become a day-school only, the foundation of the school hitherto having included the maintenance of boarders. In 1929 it was decided to rebuild the school in another part of London, and the new buildings at Hammersmith are the result.

The new school accommodates 500 pupils, including a small junior section of both boys and girls. Although the site itself is restricted in size (see site plan) it is open to north and south, to Wormwood Scrubs and to another school's playing fields respectively. It has its own playing fields adjoining. The building was therefore planned with assembly hall and dining hall unit parallel to the road to shield the teaching portions from the road, which is rather a noisy one. A slight fall in the length of the site has been utilized to give greater ceiling height in the dining hall at one end of the building than in the cloakrooms and other offices at the other. The classroom block, four storeys high, and the laboratory block, three storeys high, face south, with the gymnasium at right angles at the west end. The pupils' entrance is in the centre between the classroom and laboratory blocks, approached from a private roadway. Adjoining are the cloakrooms, etc., and a staircase giving access to each floor. A lunch-time play space is provided on the flat roof of the laboratory block. The main approach to the administration portion, the assembly hall, etc., is direct from Wood Lane, a large open staircase leading to a foyer at first-floor level.



GROUND FLOOR

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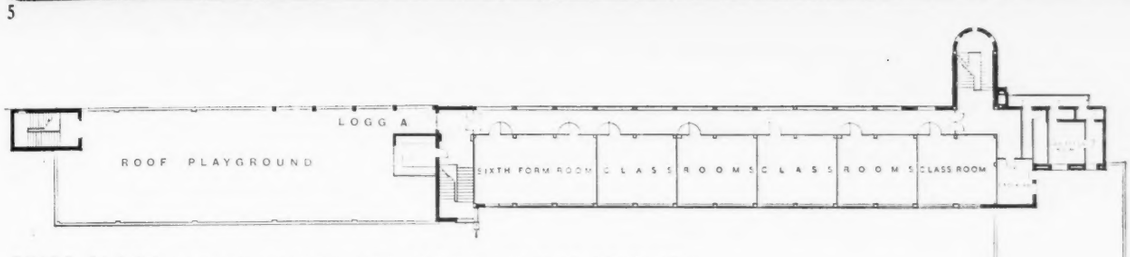
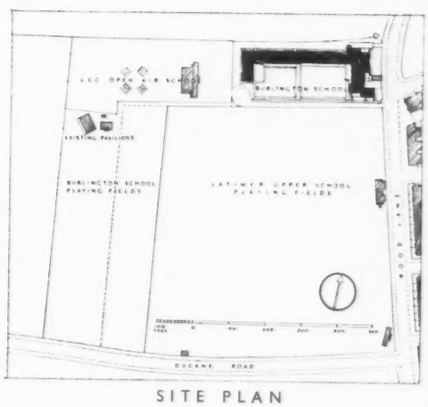


THIRD FLOOR (SECOND FLOOR NOT SHOWN, SIMILAR TO FIRST)

BURLINGTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, HAMMERSMITH

1, the road (or east) elevation. 2, the south front from the private road entrance. 3, a detail of the bell pier in the centre of the same front. 4, the centre staircase landing, with glazed metal screen painted pearl-grey. 5, the south front from the opposite direction to that shown in 2. The building is faced with 2 in. light yellow bricks, the bell pier, flower-boxes and plinth being in 2 in. dark brown bricks. The bell, suspended from a reinforced concrete cantilever, is electrically operated. The piers between windows are faced with egg-shell glazed tiles in a buff colour. 6, the pupils' entrance hall, with floor of terrazzo, with zinc dividing strips.

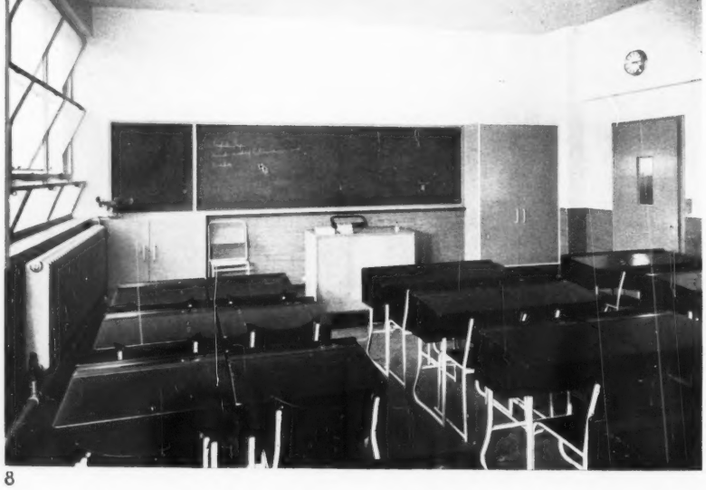
6



SITE PLAN

7

7, the assembly hall. The front of the balcony and the frieze under and above it are finished in 12-in. square acoustic tiles, left unpainted. The balcony rail is anodized aluminium. The walls are distempered ivory colour. The floor is of Austrian oak blocks. The curtains and the metal-work of the doors are turquoise colour.



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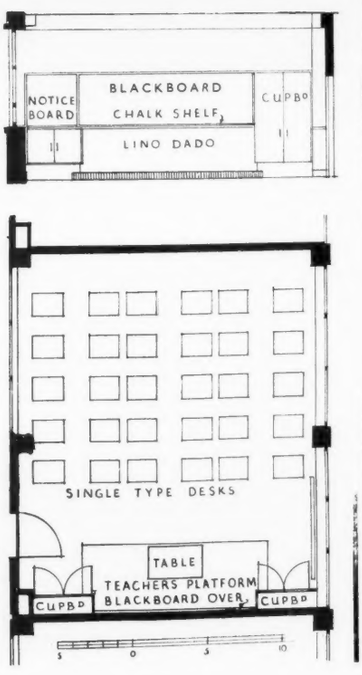
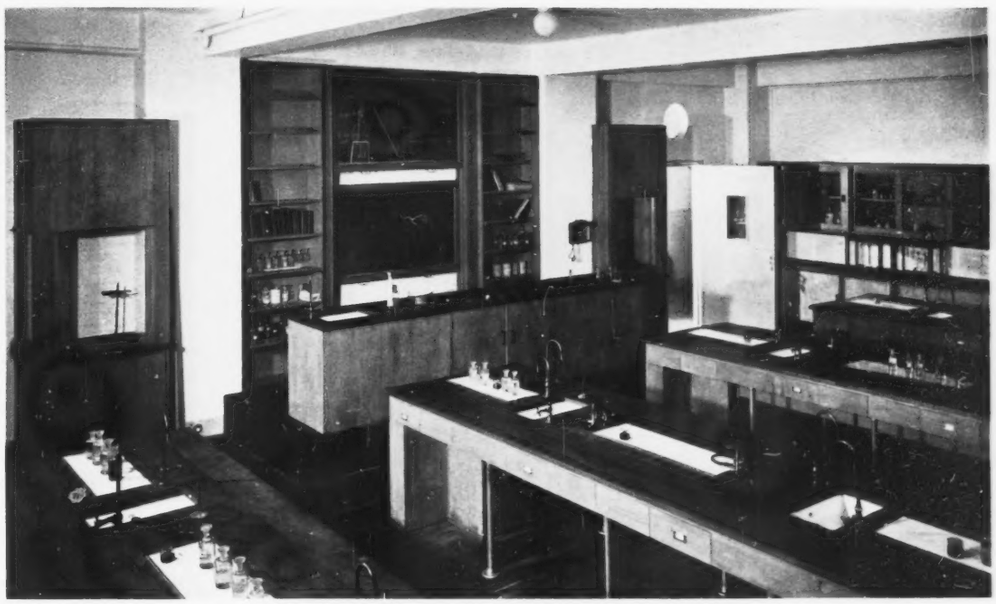


PLAN AND ELEVATION OF TYPICAL CLASSROOM

9

BURLINGTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, HAMMERSMITH

8, a typical classroom looking towards the teacher's dais, behind which are cupboards, notice-board and black-board carefully arranged in relation to each other to fill the one wall. The walls and ceilings are lime plaster distempered ivory, the floor is green linoleum and the dado, 3 ft. 6 ins. high, of pale brown linoleum with a small metal capping. The pupils' desks and chairs are black cellulosed wood with yellow enamelled tubular standards. 9, the library. This room is panelled in Australian walnut plywood, with V-joints, gilded. The shelving is in the same wood. The electric fireplace has a stainless steel reflector and marble surround. 10, the chemistry laboratory. The pupils' benches are supported on tubular metal standards and have solid ends which serve as pipe ducts and receiver cupboards. 11, the staff study, a room provided as a quiet room for the use of teachers correcting work, etc., the staff common-room being used for recreation only. Each teacher has her own place with cupboard and pigeon-holes. The desk top is covered with black linoleum. 12, the dining hall, looking towards the servery doors.



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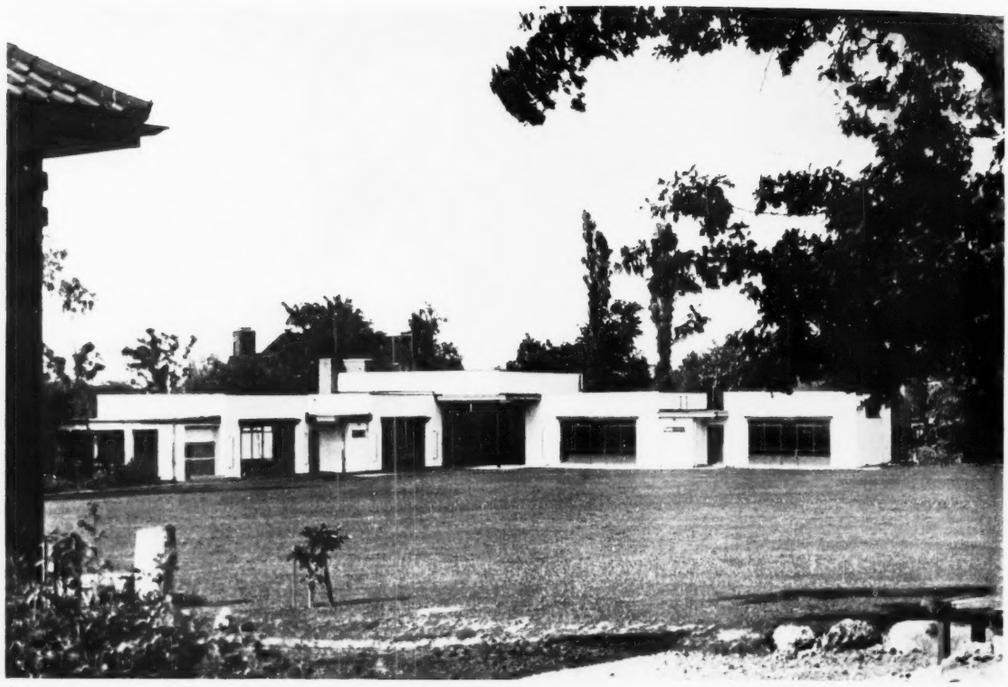
11

12

THREE LONDON

E. C. KAUFMANN, ARCHITECT



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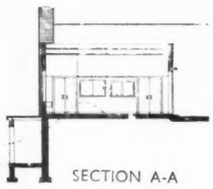
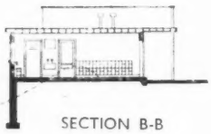
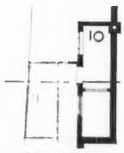


SECTION A-A



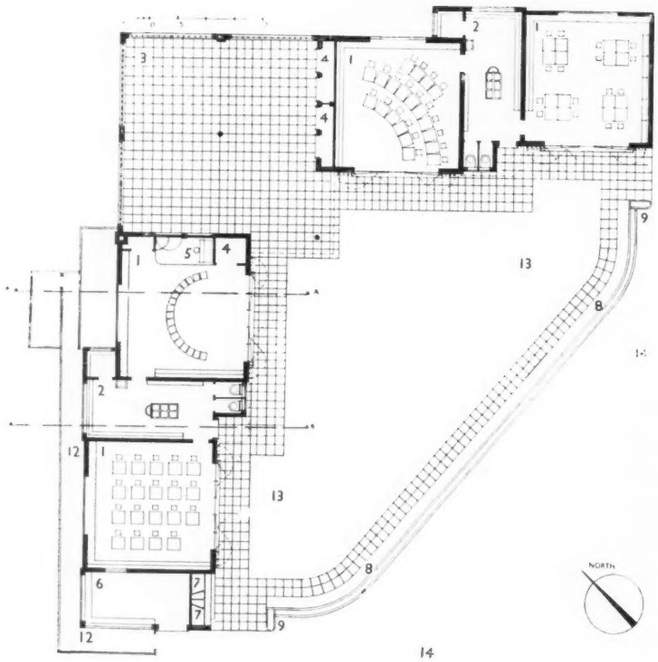
SECTION B-B

KEY: 1, Classroom. 2, Cloakroom. 3, Open covered playhall. 4, Cupboard. 5, Classroom stage. 6, Workshop. 7, Rabbit hutches. 8, Flower box with concrete table. 9, Bird bath. 10, Boiler house. 11, Ash pit. 12, Access ramp. 13, Grass-covered forecourt. 14, Playing field.



BASEMENT

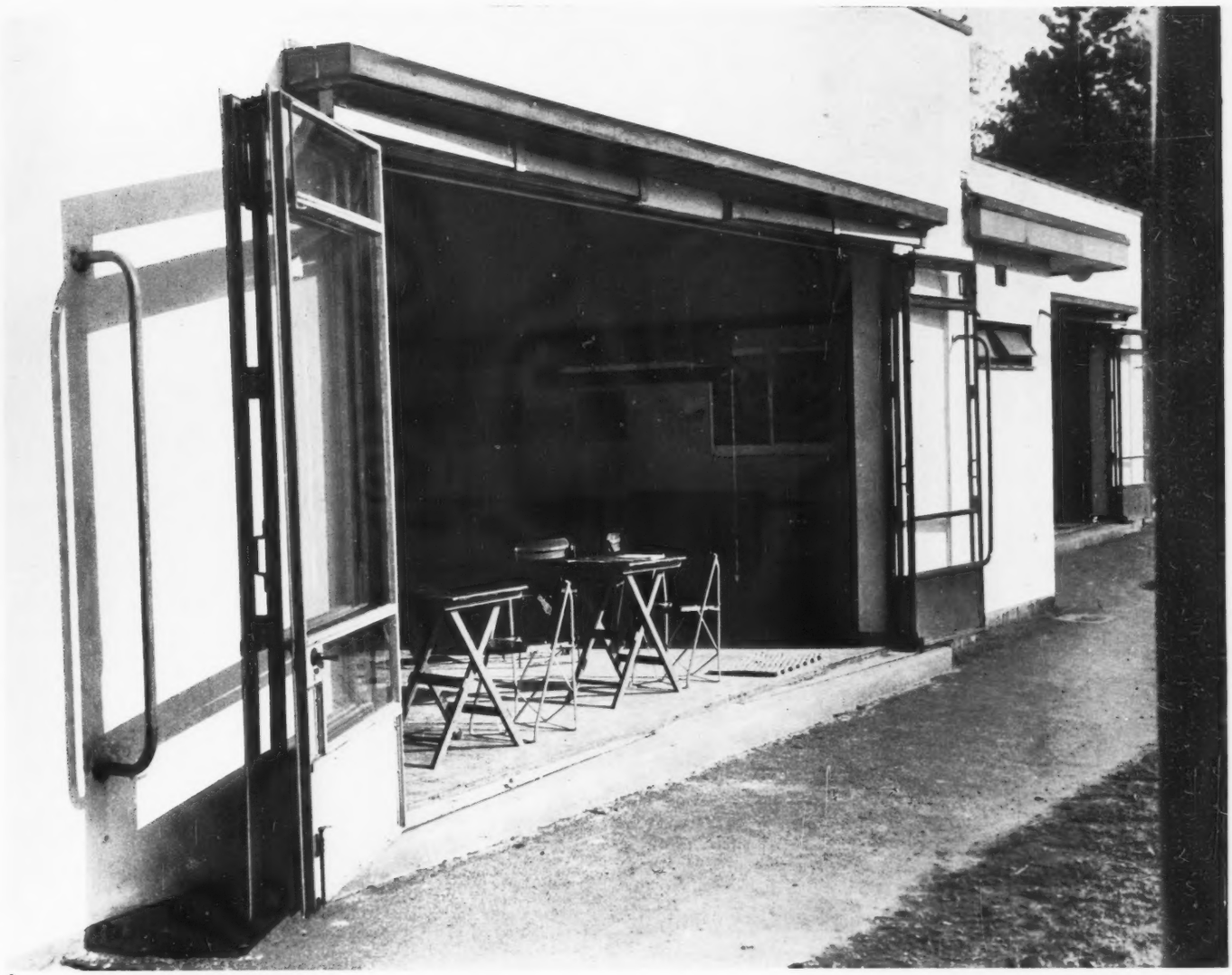
2



14

JUNIOR SCHOOL,

The second school, illustrated here, consists of new buildings forming a Junior School for King Alfred School, Hampstead. These form part of a general replanning scheme which was decided upon in 1934. The school had made use since its foundation shortly after the war of old army huts, which had been gradually replaced by buildings in solid construction. The solid buildings erected up to 1934 (some of which were designed by Mr. Barry Parker) contained the library, the school hall, a craft block, a nursery block and a science laboratory, all the remaining classrooms still being housed in the army huts, which were scattered about the grounds in a rather disorderly way. The grounds contain a number of beautiful old trees, the position of which has had to be taken into serious consideration in the replanning scheme. The factor of first importance however for the lay-out of the new classrooms was the character of the school, as an open-air day school, each classroom of which was to



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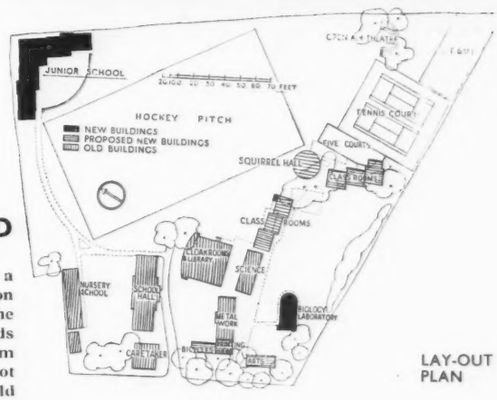


LAY-OUT PLAN

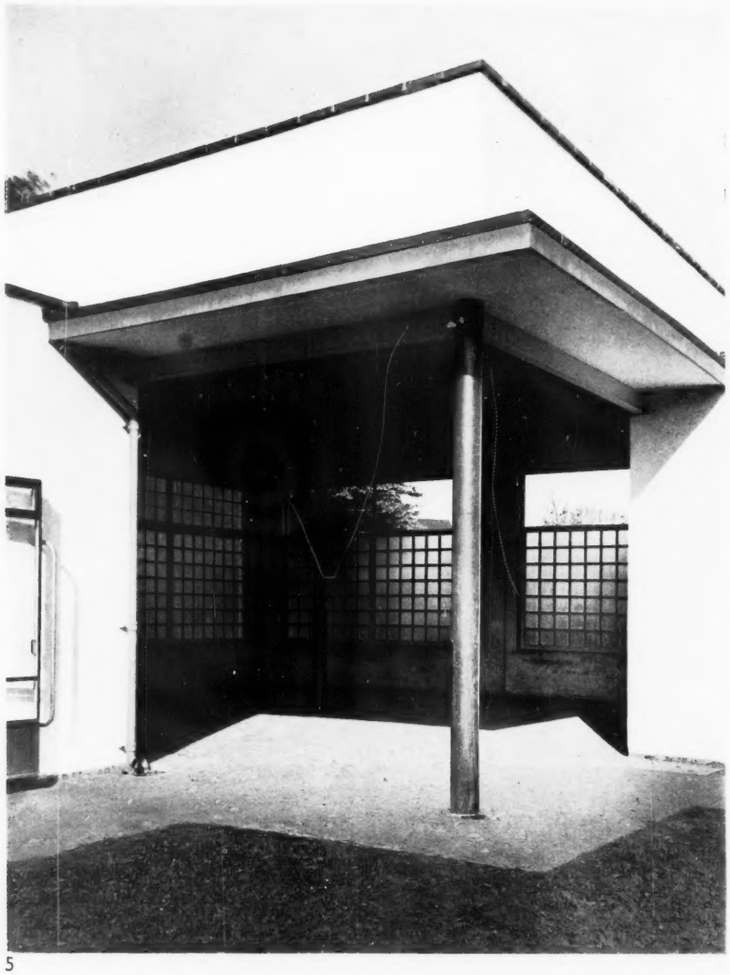
KING ALFRED SCHOOL, HAMPSTEAD

have a direct communication with the adjoining open space, in order to allow an easy change-over from the classroom to the open, not only for recreation but for the actual class work as well. Light tables and chairs instead of fixed benches had been introduced in the school at an early stage. The new lay-out, which is illustrated adjoining, shows that the special conditions dictated by the site and the educational programme led to a loose grouping of mainly one-storey blocks on those portions of the grounds which were not needed as games fields, the chief consideration being that all classrooms should face as near south as possible, in order to catch the maximum amount of sunshine.

The Junior School, which originally had been housed in a number of huts along the north-west border of the site in continuation of the present Nursery School, was to be sufficiently removed from the Senior School (in the southern portion of the grounds) as to be able to lead its separate school life. In view of the difficulty of fitting in a hockey pitch in any other than the central position where it is at present, the only possible site for the Junior School was the north corner of the grounds where it was finally decided to put it, although from more than one technical point of view this was not an ideal place for it. It was necessary to build here on a piece of land filled up on the average about 8 ft. high and the drainage and supply of all services had to be carried several hundred feet across the field, both these facts adding, of course, considerably to the building costs. The programme provided for four classrooms, two cloakrooms, a covered open hall, a small workshop for woodwork and a number of rabbit hutches. The classrooms were grouped two and two with one cloakroom serving two adjoining classrooms and the play hall in the centre. The classrooms open towards the grounds (and the sun) with wide sliding folding doors and have a big window on the opposite side. The construction

1 and 2, general views of the building looking into the angle of the L-shaped plan, 2, showing the classrooms thrown open to the air with the children having lessons outside. 3, a detail of the large folding classroom windows that make this practicable.

4



5

JUNIOR SCHOOL, KING ALFRED SCHOOL, HAMPSTEAD

is in brick with reinforced concrete lintols. The back walls and the columns of the hall only are carried down to the virgin soil, the rest of the walls being built on reinforced concrete rafts extending under classrooms and cloakrooms. The roofs have wooden joists and boarding and a 3-ply bitumen cover with 2 in. gravel on top; flashings are in copper throughout. Insulation against heat is provided by building-board fixed to the underside of joists. The heating is by a central hot-water panel heating system, the panels being fixed in two wide strips across the ceiling of each classroom. The heating in the cloakrooms is by means of heating coils extending underneath boot lockers (which are constructed of welded gasbarrel) and behind seats under clothes pegs—thus providing at the same time drying facilities. All windows and the sliding folding doors are of steel. Other doors are of the flush wooden type. The classrooms are all equipped with shelves and cupboards on the sides and underneath the blackboards and with locker space on the back wall under the window for 20 children in every class. One of the classrooms contains a small stage with room for an upright piano and with a window communicating to the adjoining hall, so that gymnastic lessons in the hall can be directed and accompanied by music from here. There are also special cupboards for theatricals, stationery and the storage of the folding tables adjoining this stage and in the hall. The cost of the whole building, including the complete equipment (except the movable furniture), amounted to £4,566, or roughly £57 per child.

4, the interior angle of the building looking into the covered play hall, showing also a classroom with doors wide open and a class being conducted just inside. 5, a detail of the play hall. 6, the same classroom windows as in 4, with open-air classes in progress.

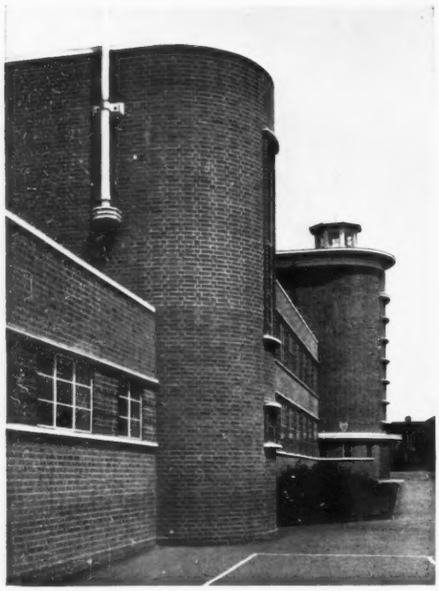
6

1, the main front, looking along the range of classroom windows with the main staircase tower in the foreground and the main entrance at the foot.

LADY BANKES COUNCIL SCHOOL, RUISLIP

W. T. CURTIS (MIDDLESEX COUNTY ARCHITECT), H. W. BURCHETT (ASSISTANT ARCHITECT FOR EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS)

The third school illustrated is one of the very large number recently built by the Middlesex County Architect's department, a department which has lately acquired the reputation of producing the most sensible work of any official architectural office. Middlesex with its growing population makes a continual demand for new schools, and it is indicative of the speed of its growth that this school, finished only a few months ago, is already being added to. The building is planned in the usual way round a courtyard — the alternative non-courtyard method of planning has certain advantages but also would entail long walks from one portion to another in a school of this size, and a more extended site than is usually available. The architects in this case have managed to obtain good orientation of the rooms, usually the defect of the courtyard plan. The building is planned in two storeys with classrooms surrounding the courtyard, cloakrooms, etc., in the terminal, one-storey wings, and two assembly halls over each other. The main and subsidiary staircases each occupy a projecting bay, the main entrance being at the foot of the former.



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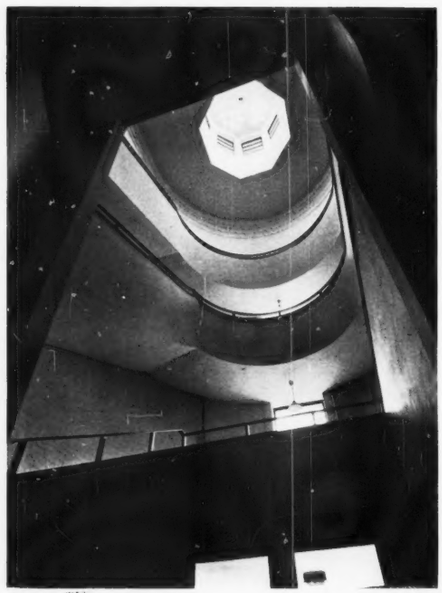
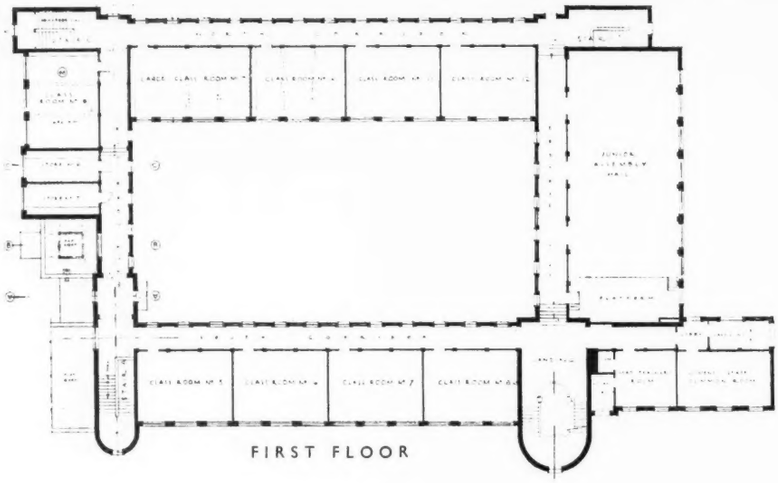
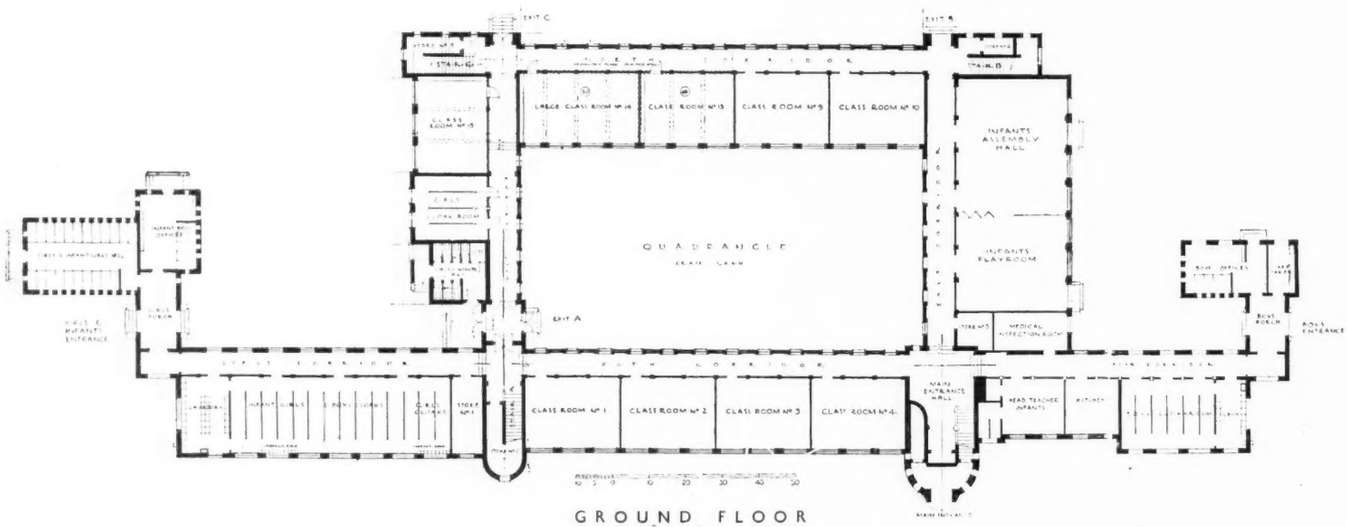


3

LADY BANKES COUNCIL SCHOOL, RUISLIP

2, looking along the main front in the reverse direction from 1, with the cloakroom windows on the extreme left. 3, the interior of the main staircase and entrance hall. The building is faced with multi-coloured red bricks, with grey-brown bricks in the panels between the windows. Copings, cills, etc., are of artificial stone. The windows are painted cream-colour and the doors green.





1. The "Casa del Fascio" in Como (G. Terragni, architect): formal opening by Mussolini.

MODERN ITALY

the national style and the international style

By Maria Albini

Some years ago Mussolini announced that "modern" architecture was to be the official style of Italy. Though an official attitude such as this represents brings its own dangers to architecture — the danger, among others, of a modern style being used in the sense of a superficially modern appearance — it at least gives what true modern architectural feeling there may be an opportunity of expressing itself. In this article Madame Albini summarizes the attitude of the younger modern architects in Italy to the nationalist idea of modernity and illustrates some examples of the work that is being done by them — work that, in spite of being fostered in a nationalist spirit, is still designed in the spirit of the international movement and has therefore international as well as local significance.

One cannot, of course, speak of Italian architecture apart from European architecture, any more than one can isolate the architecture of any nation. Modern architecture, if it really exists, goes beyond the frontiers of nationality, to merge into a single, universal trend.

Edoardo Persico, one of the best-known modern Italian critics, said in a lecture which he gave in Turin before he died: "Architecture as an expression of society? That is only a problem of taste. During the last century the history of European art has been not only a succession of peculiar actions and reactions, but a movement of collective consciousness. To recognize this means to understand the nature of architecture's real contribution."*

Modern architecture therefore, in Italy as elsewhere, must be considered as something more than, and different from, a local or political expression; for as such it cannot be allowed complete artistic validity.

When we say that the modern art movement is nowhere a movement of local significance, but a world-wide one, we do not deny that each nation has its particular aspect, thanks to that deep and spiritual personality which exists in each nation as in each individual. One can therefore recognize a true Italian characteristic, which creates a common relationship of forms, schemes and designs, in the work of the various Italian architects, who are all at the same time working under one single trend and one single European taste. In this *purely spiritual* direction, one can understand and accept a particular tradition; it is the substance from which the artist draws his creation, and not a fixed and lifeless scheme, to which a live personality must submit.

In attempting to judge the architecture of our time, we must, of course, pass over those buildings, discernible in any town, which only conceal under new forms, used without any renewed feeling, the old architectural conceptions, revealing their false character in the plan, and, generally, in the organization of the building itself. But it is sufficient rather to examine the smaller number of architects who, all over the country, are working in a common atmosphere of modern vision and taste, to establish the trend of architecture genuinely representative of our time.

We can, through such artists and through their present-day activities, establish the history of modern art, as we can the history of the arts of past periods; because there does now exist in architecture a "modern style," which has had its archaic period and which is now reaching its fuller development.

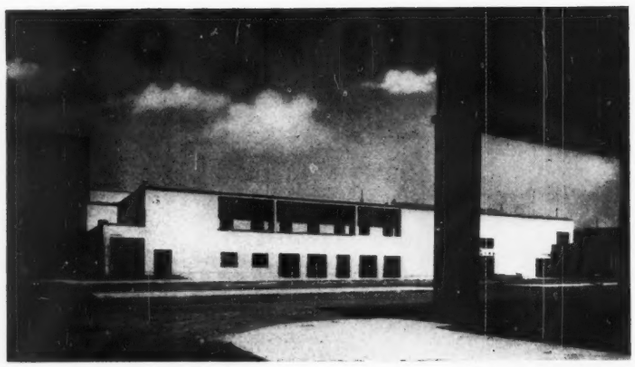
The continuity through time of this new architecture is guaranteed by its adherence to strict and simple concepts, its very direct means of realization, and its bold and sure impulse towards the future, which are united in a sense of tradition, of continuity of life, and not bound to an old routine copy of antiquated forms. And by adhering to these, modern architecture maintains the right to live side by side with the famous monuments of the past.

The new railway station at Florence, for example, a square block of reinforced concrete and glass, which rises only a few yards from the fourteenth-century church of Santa Maria Novella, is an undisputed instance. After having been the subject of violent argument and the grimmest opposition, it was eventually given official sanction by Mussolini, the head of the Italian Government. Mussolini expressed his "satisfaction and approval, which he desired to extend to all the young men, who are seeking in architecture and other fields of expression an art to correspond with the feelings and needs of our fascist century."

But what can a "fascist architecture" be?

One hopes it is not — whatever the fascist critics and architects may feel — typified by those works which actually only imperfectly conceal under new guises either the decadent remains of a spiritless form or an entire absence of comprehension. And one hopes it is not typified by those which copy classic schemes,

* *Forecast on Architecture.* Lecture delivered in Turin in 1935, by Edoardo Persico, and published by Casabella, July, 1936.



2

So far as scale goes, one of the most ambitious of recent Italian architectural enterprises is the new town of Sabaudia, which has been built, with Montuori as its chief architect, in the southern part of the newly drained Pontine marsh. The new borough covers an area of 144.3 sq. km., with a permanent population of 1,800 inhabitants. The first stone was laid on August 5th, 1933. The plan was the subject of a competition. The main road to the town branches off the via Appia *and runs direct to the central square seen in the photograph.* 2. *This square contains a communal hall and an administrative* Como del Fascio, *a theatre, military and police barracks, a covered market and a hotel. In subsidiary positions are the post office, school and church. Dwelling houses are planned along rectangular tree-lined streets. The buildings generally are of reinforced concrete construction, faced with* tufa *or Cyrcean limestone.*

simplifying them in a commonplace manner in order to pretend that they are modern.

If, when speaking of a " fascist century," Mussolini simply meant a " new period," then we can only say that by " fascist architecture " we mean nothing more than that same new architecture that was born in the climate of Gropius or Neutra—even if it is accused of being " German architecture." That alone is capable of representing, in its æsthetic expression, entirely new modern ethics, because the problem of style is closely bound with the conception of the very life of our time, in all its new and original expressions of industrial and mechanical activities, and of social and domestic necessities.

Consequently, we must condemn the falsely modern attitude, which boasts of being of our day, while it is, in fact, the apology of the luxury and vanity of a now disappearing world; an attitude, nevertheless, that was upheld by Ojetti, an Italian critic, who wrote " . . . in Europe, we have been living for the past hundred years under the illusion that men can be changed for ever according to certain so-called sacred principles: equality, liberty, fraternity (and the equality which we achieve through art); and, assisted by universal poverty, these principles have only succeeded in humbling everybody, in levelling down the high achievements, which is the same thing as levelling down intelligence and taste. Fortunately, the happy ambition of appearing greater than what we are, remains stronger than all these principles and theories "* . . . But this conception of intelligence and art is superseded and condemned by modern life and modern taste themselves. Modern art regains originality, not by this sort of reactionary polemic against any form of independence and against the movement of the nineteenth century, which century, in politics, in art and in life was conscious of the profound revolutionary significance of human individuality. Persico, defining the spiritual reality of the world which creates, among other manifestations of art, the architecture of today, declared in the lecture already quoted: " After the War, the world left its traditional track; political and social forms became unstable. But art is regaining its consistency, after a century of doubt, by establishing a new creative order, which identifies itself with a living reality."

The number of works of genuine modern architecture, historically alive and valid, in Italy is not yet large, but there does exist a compact group of artists, united by the genuinely modern spirit and ideas. And that must be sufficient.

The " Casa del Fascio " of Como, and the house by the same architect, Terragni, in Milan; the reception hall designed by Persico, Nizzoli and Palanti at the Milan Exhibition; the stadiums by the architect Nervi, in Florence and in Rome; the Pavilion at the " *Fiera campionaria* " of Milan, built for the I.N.A. (National Insurance Institute) by the architect Albini; Sabaudia, a new town conceived and built in modern fashion in the " Agro pontino," which has just been drained; the huge garage at Venice; the school buildings by Romano and Clausetti in Lecco, and a few of the important group for the University City of Rome; certain ports and aerodromes, such as those of Genoa and Milan; these can help us in defining what contribution Italian architecture is making to this international school of artistic achievement.

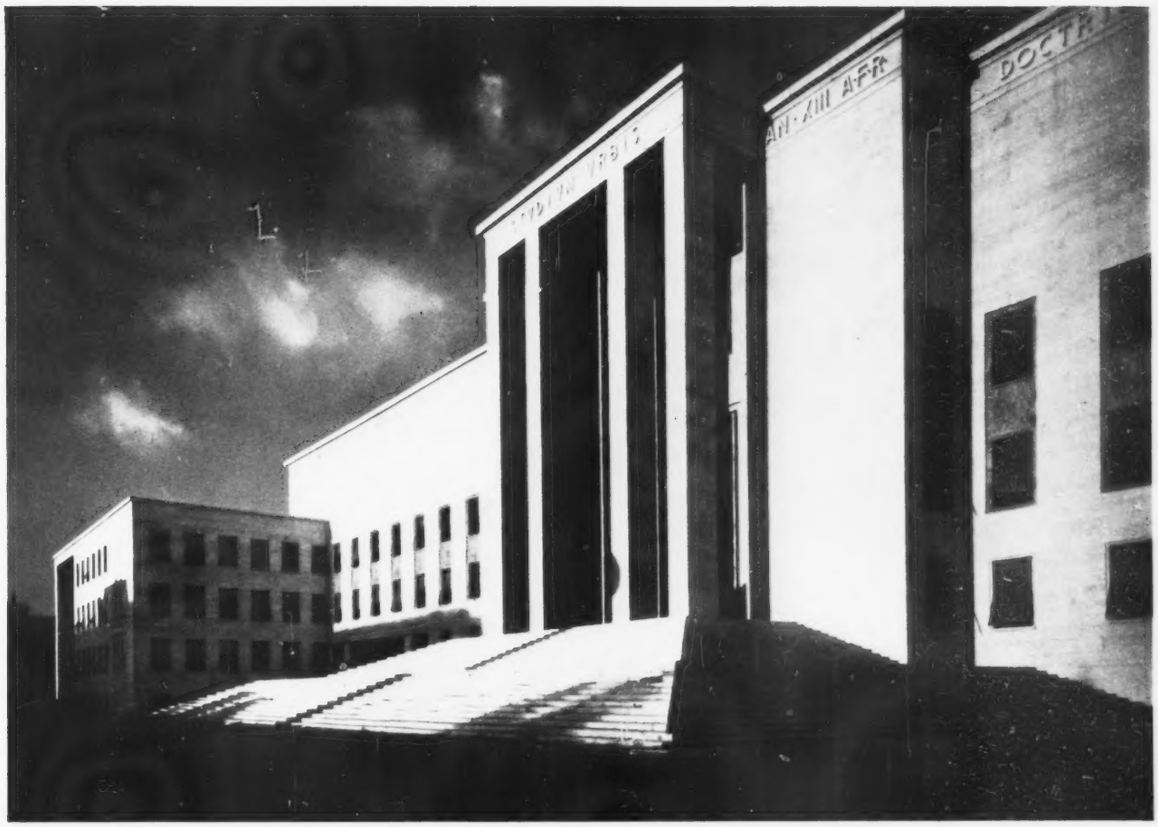
Buildings created for very varied purposes, and yet possessing something in common in the way of style, show clearly enough that the most intelligent architects have understood that there is a separate design problem apart from practical contingencies, be it economical or political, local or functional. And this unity of style, this comprehension of the vast problem of modern art, entitles these

[Continued on page 18]

3

Another scheme of ambitious scale is the new University City in Rome. The scheme, planned by M. Piacentini, covers 220,000 sq. metres, of which 42,000 represent building sites, 60,000 roads and avenues, and 118,000 gardens and colonnades. The buildings vary in architectural character from the frankly modern, as in the School of Mathematics seen in the foreground in this air view, 3 (*and in more detail overleaf*), *to a simplified academic style as in the administrative centre shown on* Plate iv *opposite. The main buildings are planned round a central square from which four avenues radiate. The work began in 1932. The City was formally opened in October, 1935, and cost about 87,000,000 lire.*

* Ugo Ojetti, " Letter to G. Ponti-Pegaso, Florence; January, 1933."



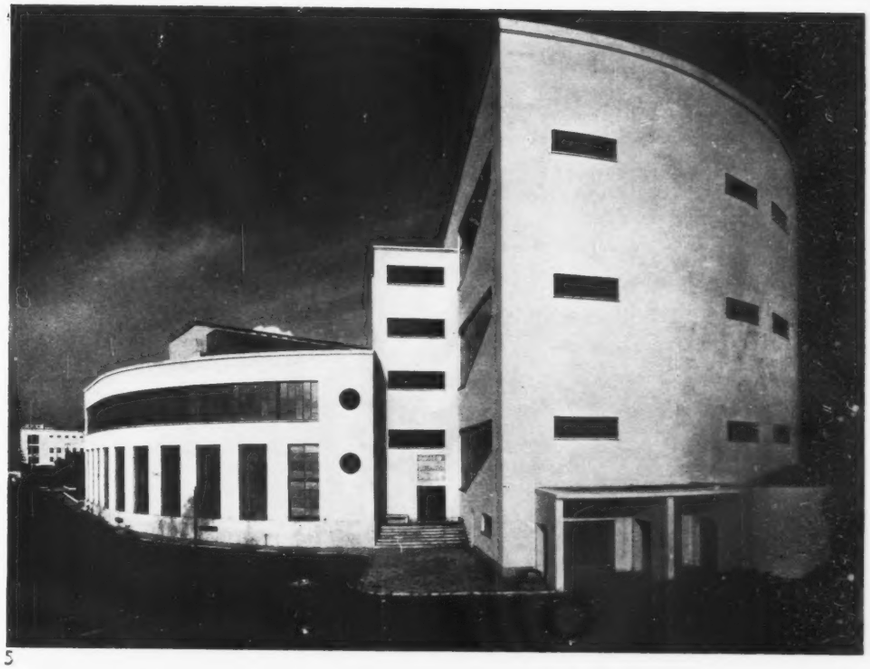
A

B

Two typical exteriors from the new University City at Rome—examples of the simplified academic style favoured by one section of the modern Italian schools, to be contrasted with the entirely modern international style exemplified elsewhere and praised by Madame Albini in her article. A, the main entrance to the Rectorate or administrative centre, containing offices and also the University Library (the *Alexandrine* Library). It stands on the central axis of the main avenue. The architect was Piacentini. B, the faculty of Hygiene, a building of the same character, with a ceramic facing and piers and cornices of travertine. A. Foschini, architect.

The uncompromisingly modern school of Italian architecture is exemplified here in the Pavilion for the National Insurance Institute at Milan. The architect was Franco Albini, one of the small band of Italian architects that Madame Albini refers to in her article who are trying to create a modern Italian school of international significance. An interior is shown on *Plate vi*. Compare this building with the more academic work shown on the preceding plate.

4, the "Salone delle Vittoria" (E. Persico and J. Palanti, architects; Lucio Fontana, sculptor) at the Milan Triennale Exhibition, 1936. 5, The School of Mathematics in the University City, Rome (Gio Ponti, architect); see figure 3, page 16. The illustration shows the side of the great auditorium block, accommodating three large lecture halls with raised floors and acoustically curved ceilings superimposed on each other. In this building the two tendencies of Italian architectural design are both evident. The portion illustrated is content with the grandest modern expression, while the main front, like other of the buildings in the University City, is stylized into an academic façade whose modernity consists in a simplification of the neo-classical architecture of effect rather than the effective use of the architecture of function. 6, an exhibition pavilion for the National Insurance Institute (Franco Albini, architect), exemplifying the use of the imaginative formal vocabulary that some of the younger Italian architects have achieved in the province they have made especially their own: display and exhibition design. (See also Plate vi). *7 and 8, two buildings of a semi-public nature that, the second particularly, can be classed nevertheless as genuinely modern in conception. 7, the Casa Madre dell'Opera Nazionale at Ballila (Del Sebbio, architect)—a reinforced concrete structure. 8, the Fencing Academy in Rome (Moretti, architect)—an L-shaped structure faced with Carrara marble slabs.*



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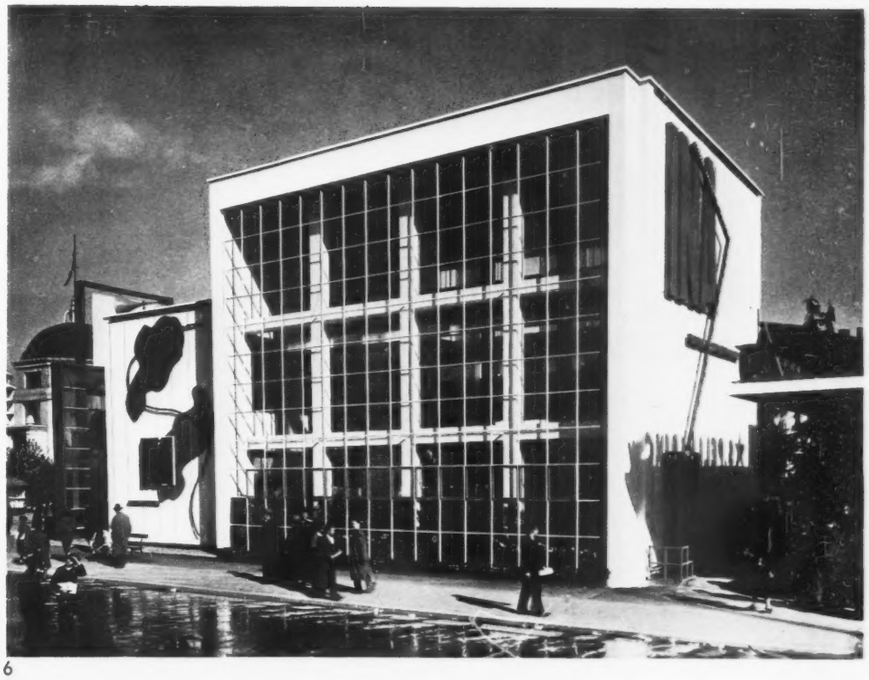

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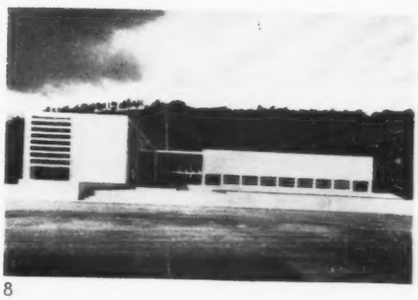

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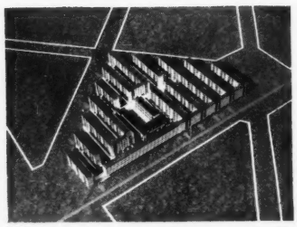

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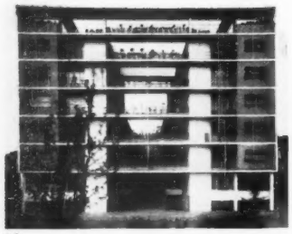

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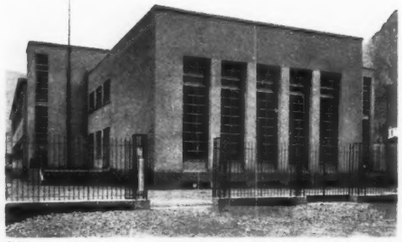

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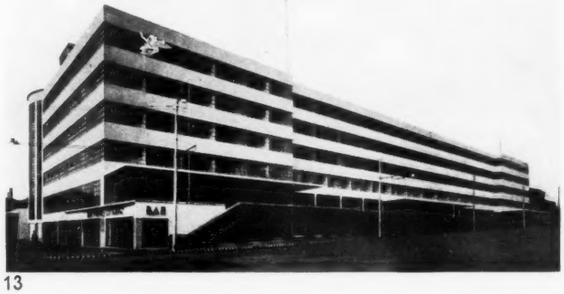


13

9, The new railway station at Florence (Baroni Berardi, architect). It is of reinforced concrete and steel construction. The glazed centre building houses the waiting and other public rooms. The outside is faced with Florentine stone; the inside with variegated marbles. **10**, *a block of flats in Milan (Terragni and Lingeri, architects), consisting of two detached blocks, linked by balconies and terraces. The structure is reinforced concrete, faced with white marble slabs.* **11**, *an elementary school in Lecco, Lombardy (Romano and Clausetti, architects) for 200 pupils. The building consists of two symmetrical wings (for boys and girls) and a central block containing the accommodation common to both, such as the library and gymnasium.* **12**, *a working-class housing scheme in reinforced concrete, planned in parallel blocks of north-south orientation (Albini, Camus and Galanti, architects).* **13** *and* **14**, *a large garage in Venice with a capacity of 1,000 cars under cover and 300 outside on the terraces. The floors have access by helical ramps, one for ascending and the other for descending.*

14

Italian architects to be mentioned among the others of the European movement.

And if we want to find a social value in art, putting an end to the absurd unprofitable discussions about fascist art, communist art, and the rest, we can look for its real value once more in Persico's words: "an act of faith in the greatness of pacified Europe."* And it is his words, his declaration of faith in the universality of art and of human life, that can close my remarks, leaving the illustration of new buildings that follow to tell the rest of my story:—

"It is not for me to complain of the decadence of German architecture, of Hitler's principles, demanding sloping roofs by force of law! I do not feel surprised that journalists, all over Europe, have not understood why the tenants of workmen's dwellings in Vienna converted their windows into loopholes, and barricaded themselves in the *Siedlungen* as in fortresses. I will not even say that modern architecture is an attempt at organizing Europe on modern lines. It may or may not be so; but this is beyond architecture. I do believe, however, that . . . the deep spirit of art is nothing but independence and freedom of mind. That is what we learn from æsthetic theories, real and valid, and also from the unchanging tradition of European art."

* From the Report which accompanied their design for the Hall of Honour at the Triennale Exhibition; Milan, 1935: Persico, Nizzolini, Palanti.

HOUSE AT FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT

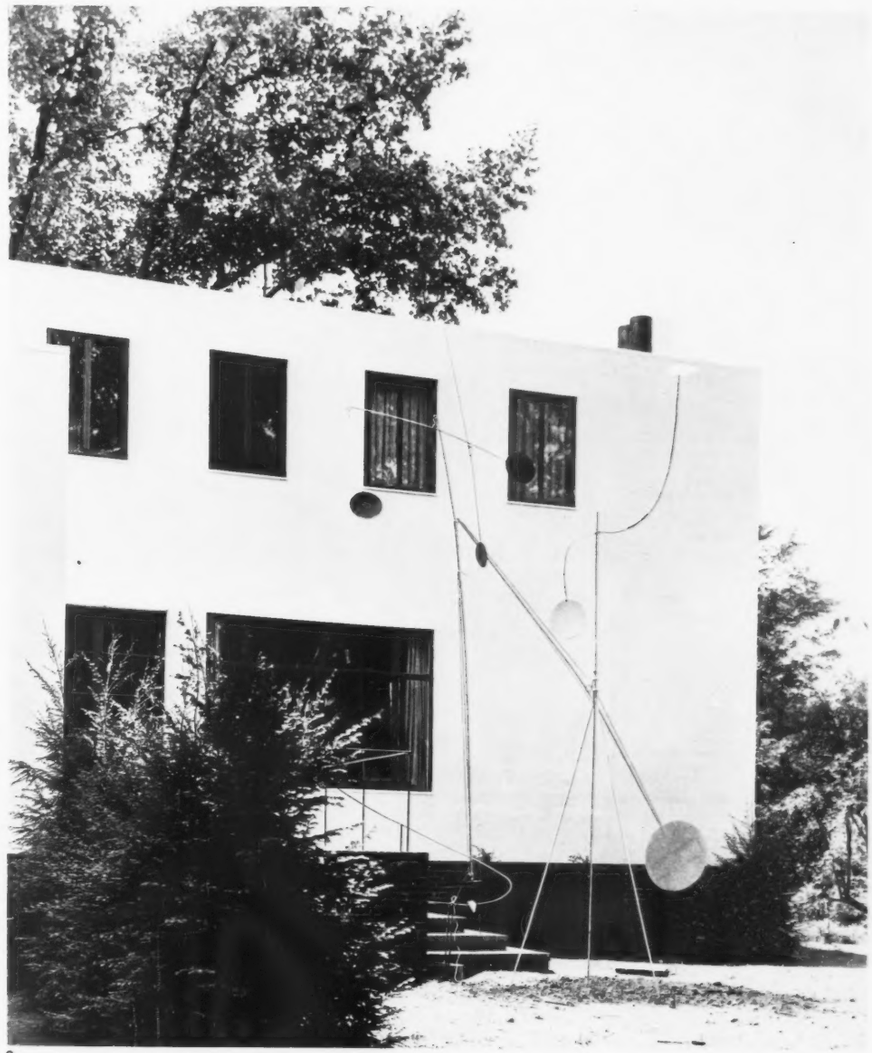
REMODELLED BY HENRY-RUSSELL HITCHCOCK, JR., ARCHITECT.

The original house, a "Grecian Villa" built about 1835, is located on a road leading into the woods on the edge of a small New England town some ten miles from the city of Hartford. It is surrounded on three sides by rather large suburban estates, and to the west and rear, where the ground drops off, by a golf course, assuring protection of the view.

The house is of rather heavy wooden frame construction covered with a flat sheathing of matched boarding. The original plan was of four rooms of varying sizes with the stairs at right angles to the entrance hall. About 1895 a service wing, imitating in style the original house, was added to the north side, replacing the original basement kitchen.

The purpose of the remodelling was to rehabilitate the house, which had fallen into a serious state of disrepair: to adjust it technically for contemporary living, as well as, more specifically, to provide plenty of well-lighted wall space for the owner's important collection of modern French paintings. As regards the existing house, the room on the right of the entrance was removed in order to enlarge the hall, and the dining-room was extended eight feet to the rear. As this necessitated the removal of one internal and one external bearing wall, metal parts were used to readjust the loading: i.e. the corner of the old room in the hall was suspended from the roof truss by a metal rod. The rear wall above the dining-room was supported by a metal beam over the ceiling, which it does not visibly break. The external walls throughout were insulated between the wooden studs with "Rockwool," and the wooden lath was replaced with metal lath, increasing somewhat the fire-resistant quality of the structure.

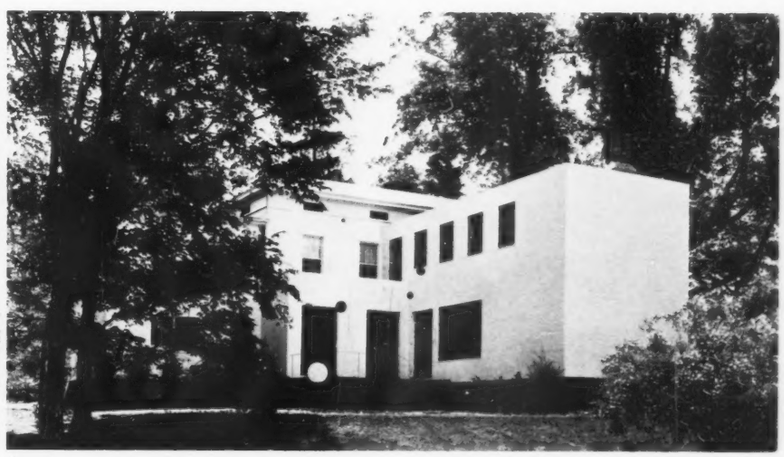
As the use of modern fireproof construction for the new addition would not have improved the insurance rating of the house, and as the traditional wooden frame construction was considerably cheaper and more familiar to the builders, the new wing to the rear was built in the standard present-day American variant of the traditional wooden frame construction of



2

1, the original Grecian villa, of about 1835. 2 and 3, the new wing, carried out in the traditional American timber construction. A mobile sculpture by Alexander Calder can be seen in 2, placed at the head of the well which provided the old house with water.

1



3

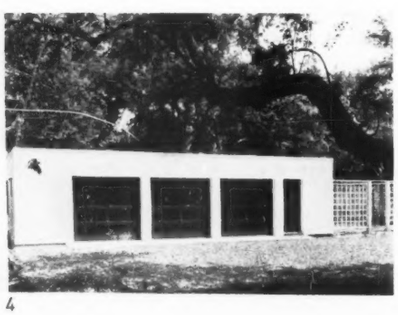
HOUSE AT FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT

the old house. The skeleton character of this wooden construction permits great freedom in planning and window placing, and it also provides between the frequent light studs convenient spaces for the "Rockwool" insulation, which is particularly designed for use with this sort of construction, and for the ducts for the air-conditioning which was introduced throughout the house.

"Rockwool" beneath the practically flat, internal draining, "built up" roof serves the same purpose of insulation as the five-foot attic behind the heavy Greek cornice and parapet on the old house. Standard metal casements without crossbars, as more practical and elastic for grouping than sash, are used in the new wing. But the doors to the terrace are of wood, repeating the south doors of the old house, both because existing standard metal doors were too small and too awkwardly subdivided, and because the old type of doors was more suited to the character of the dining-room, which is being entirely decorated by the painter, Eugène Berman, of whose work the owner has already a very large collection. The wall sheathing is in appearance the same as on the old house, although it actually consists of two layers of thinner boards, the inch-and-a-quarter matched boarding of the old house being today difficult to obtain.

Upstairs the new wing contains a dressing-room provided with fitted cupboards and a mirror lined niche, a bath, and a master's bedroom, as well as a communicating corridor. The terrace over the dining-room extension opens from this corridor, which is hung with drawings on a deep purple wall. Downstairs the new wing provides the chief living-room of the house, particularly prepared for the larger and more important paintings. The ceiling and side walls are of white painted plaster, the chimney-breast and the opposite end wall (treated like a screen) are covered with grey fabric. The curtains, of the same fabric, which at night cover about a third of the walls from floor to ceiling, are of dull grass-green. The mantel is of red-flecked grey marble; the wooden cupboards grey. The rug is of rich orange-brown; the upholstery chiefly grey. This room contains the large and famous "Seated Woman" by Picasso, three de Chiricos from the Eluard Collection and a double self-portrait by Bérard, as well as other pictures by Picasso, Matisse, Tchelitchew, Berman and Dali, and sculpture by Lehmbruck.

The hall is of white painted plaster; the doors dark red. In this hang three large Derains. The reception room on the left of the entrance is of red painted plaster against which are hung a varied group of paintings. The library behind is fitted with specially designed movable wooden shelving, as the intended standard metal cantilever shelving, such as is used in American public libraries, was found to be very expensive. These old rooms preserve their "Grecian" black and gold marble mantels. The dining-room will be entirely the work of Eugène Berman, but, although the panels are painted, it is not yet entirely finished.



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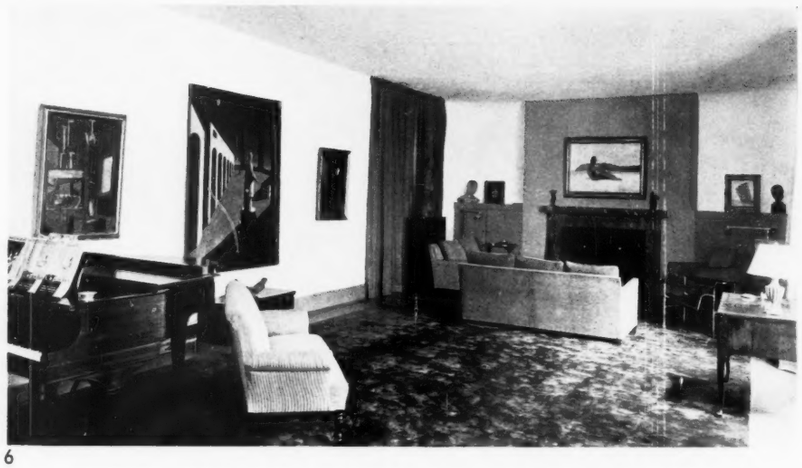

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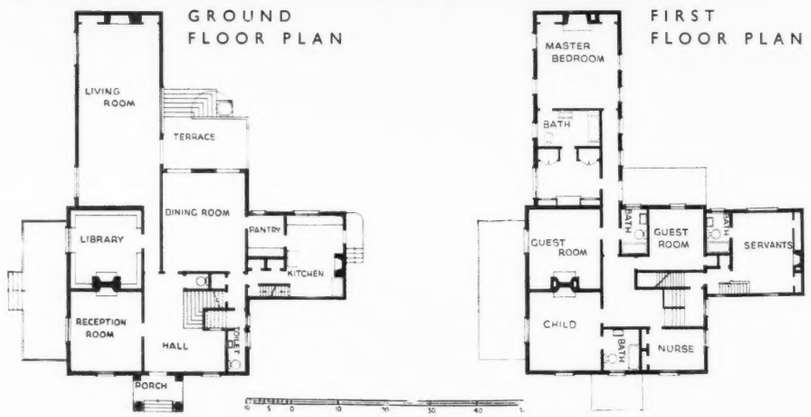


4, the garage in the grounds (visible from the house) of similar wood construction to the house, with standard wood and glass petrol filling-station doors. 5, the library. 6, the living-room, showing its utilization to display some of the owner's collection of modern French paintings.

1

By courtesy of CONCRETE WAY

Biotechnics*

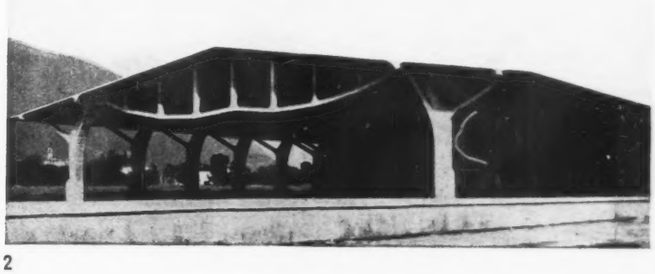
Functional Design and the Vegetable World

From time to time the illustrated papers publish photographs of the *Victoria Regia* which show the neatly rimmed six-foot-wide leaves of this gigantic water-lily floating on a hot-house tank. Few of those who glance at them realize that these thin platter-like discs are rafts strong enough to support a large dog or a young child. But the engineer who examines the underside of one of them is astonished to find it might serve as a scale model of a reinforced-concrete roof-span. For here the monolithic system of transverse beams supporting slab decking was fully embodied æons before François Hennebique first worked it out, and there are even stiffening haunches to increase the shear resistance of those parts of these leaf-beams where the tension is most pronounced.

There are a number of natural organic forms that closely resemble forms devised by man. When Ozenfant said that if Nature had needed to produce a bottle she would have evolved one closely resembling a bottle as we know it, he was probably thinking of the Samura tree which grows in the desert parts of Argentina. The trunk of this tree not only looks like a Chianti flask but actually stores a supply of water to nourish the foliage during periods of drought. Thus we have two branches of technology, one human and the other phytogenical, constantly evolving towards the same ends. May we not presume that in every problem which engages an engineer or architect, natural laws are inexorably informing his designs, even his calculations and detail-drawings? A whole series of phenomena corroborate the assumption that the interaction between natural forces and matter results in the continual recurrence of certain forms.

A surface subject to pressure inevitably needs support in one direction, and where material is economized in the other as well. The resultant form is one of the most constant in Nature. A plant arrives at it by its own tropism; man by intuition, experience and calculation. So, too, in decay internal and external forces are actively shaping what is being discarded or replaced (for both living and dead matter seem to follow a single impulse of growth or reorganization); and it is not difficult to find a similar process in the work of man. Sand always slides into a slope of 34–37 degrees, a pyramid being the natural formation of its grains in which their conflicting forces of gravitation and friction come to rest. The cone, the pyramid, parallel lines, the plane and the globe are all "constants" in Nature's technique. Nature seeks an ideal state of equilibrium between these forces. The moment she begins to succeed she ceases to be formless; the result being an embodiment of the shapes characteristic of flowers, crystals and other organisms. We are told that everything on earth is changing, and so moving; but an equally universal law governs its movement: an urge to find a condition of harmony or rest; harmony, maturity or crystallization. The shape in which matter achieves a balance of strength is its perfection, a solution of its own particular problem in which there is no waste or superfluity. If we add to, or take something from, that perfection the shape loses its equipoise, its characteristic appearance, and has to start in quest of both afresh. In the same way, human inventions arise from the will of man, and move towards the intrinsic perfection of a final form that can only be invalidated by the emergence of new conditions. Thus the best possible shape of chair could be superseded by one arbitrarily invented for the purpose. But that new shape would soon disappear just because it was not the right one. Again, if humanity started sitting in a different position the perfect shape would have to be modified accordingly.

The design of a man who can foresee each of the various forces which his building will be subjected to should be a consummate one, because he may be expected to avoid all merely transient influences. But such an achievement is rare enough to rank as the highest order of creative work. Perfection is far more often attained by the patient groping of generation after generation, intuition, or the cumulative experience and combined reasoning of hundreds of different men. It is for this reason that the masterpieces of architecture are the expression of whole nations, certain epochs or phases of society. Their purely personal significance fades into the background.



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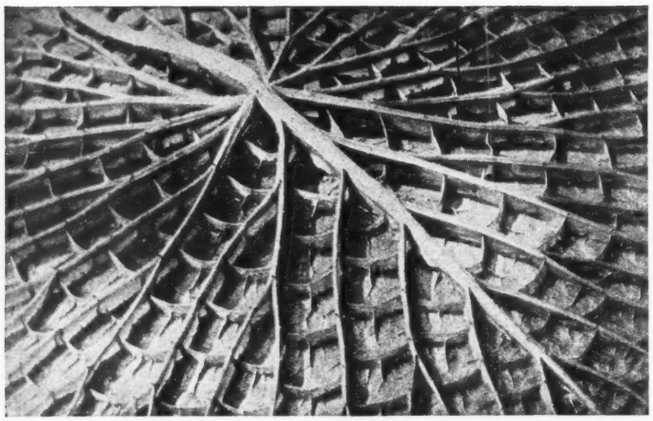
* This essay, is an adaptation by P. Morton Shand of a paper originally composed by Karel Honzik, the distinguished Czech architect. M. Honzik himself took the photographs of *Victoria Regia*.



3

Though veiled by a whole sequence of different semblances, this abstract perfection of form exists only as an ideal. We know our own technique is very imperfect compared with Nature's. But even Nature seldom achieves perfect co-ordination of form and purpose. The beams of the *Victoria Regia* and the column of the bamboo are exceptional examples. Some investigators in the field of biotechnics advance arbitrary explanations as to what was Nature's practical intention in evolving this, that and the other shape. None of these explain the existence of hundreds of variants among plants or animals of a single type. Why should there be 6,000 varieties of the unicellular Diatomacæ living under identical conditions? Which of them represents its perfect form? On the contrary, this infinite multiplicity might lead us to doubt a single general law. In *The Intelligence of Flowers*, Maeterlinck describes their dramatic struggle for shape. He gives us examples of their resourcefulness of invention and their striving to achieve new properties by trial and error that read like laboratory experiments. The correlation of form and function, and that isochronous coincidence which so rarely appears in the works either of Nature or of Man, is a field still waiting to be explored. Rémy de Goncourt cites the stag-beetle as an instance of how form tends to outlive function. Though its claws are now a useless ornament, they may have been originally provided as a defence against some extinct enemy. Do we not encounter this persistence of form in every walk of life? From time to time we succeed in shaking off old forms that have become so much top-hamper, and yet we revolt against those that supplant them because they announce a new content. It seems as though form precedes function, or anyhow outlives it; and that there is a continual oscillation between them as in the scales of a balance. We feel instinctively that both are for ever striving to attain a fixation of equilibrium in which to fuse their separate identities. Perhaps one day we shall discover the explanation of this separability of form and function which is so disturbing to us in an architect's work. The anticipation or survival of a form is apt to blind us to the object, the mission, of the form itself. This is hard to appraise, and can only be slowly gleaned in what may be read between, rather than from, those (lines) which are the characteristic mould-marks of its final shaping.

1 and 3 are detail-photographs of a leaf of the Victoria Regia. This South American water-lily, which was first discovered in the eighteen-thirties, was named after Queen Victoria. It created a great sensation in the botanical world, firing the leading horticulturalists of England with the ambition to be the first to grow it successfully in Europe. The Duke of Devonshire and his head gardener, afterwards known to fame as Sir Joseph Paxton, were equally excited about it; and equally determined to win that coveted distinction. Victoria Regia obstinately refused to flower at Kew, but shot out 140 leaves and 112 blooms in rapid succession at Chatsworth. This flattering acclimatization of a tropical plant, whose 5–6 ft. diameter leaves can support a loading strain of 100 lbs. without sinking, compelled Paxton to build a new home for it in double quick time. The construction of the hot-house he designed specially for it, which had a 33 ft. diameter tank and a 61 ft. by 49 ft. ridge-and-furrow roof, embodied the structural principles of the lily's foliage—as did all Paxton's subsequent greenhouses. In explaining his plans for the Great Exhibition Building of 1851 (the Crystal Palace) to the Fine Arts Society, many years later, Paxton held up a leaf of the Victoria Regia. Pointing to the 2-in. deep ribs radiating from its centre like bottom-flanged cantilevers, and the delicate system of cross-bracing fibres that prevents the webbed membrane between them buckling, he modestly remarked: "Nature was the engineer, providing the leaf with longitudinal and transverse girders and supports that I, borrowing from it, have adopted in this building." 2, the roof of a goods-shed at Chiasso, designed by Robert Maillart; 5, the underside of the canopy of the grand-stand at Northolt Racecourse, designed by Oscar Faber; and 6, an inside view of the ramp by which the cars manufactured in the Lingotto Works of the Fiat Company at Turin reach the testing track on the roof (architect, Giacomo Matté-Trucco), all offer examples in support of the thesis of this article. 4, which illustrates the almost art-nouveau *groining of an aisle in the mediaeval St. Vitus's Cathedral in Prague, shows that, even in the days of masonry construction, there was the same analogy between human technique and that of plant growth.*

4

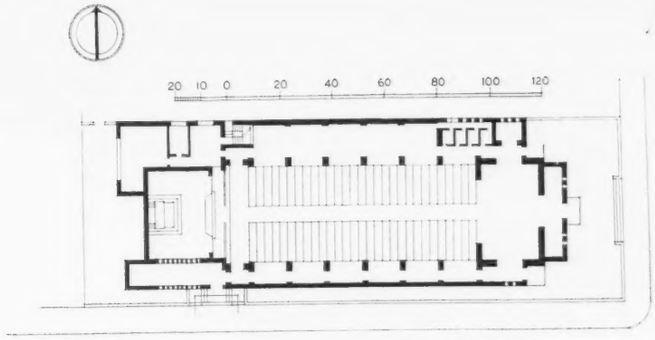
5

6

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE

I

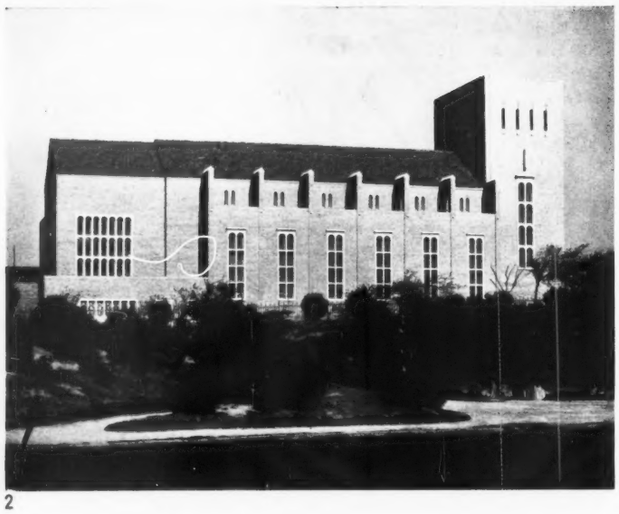
1



F. X. VELARDE

This Roman Catholic church of St. Monica at Bootle, near Liverpool, is designed to hold 850 people. An unusual point in the plan (adjacent) is that the choir, instead of being in the customary position over the entrance at the west end, has been placed over the sacristies. This frees the west end from congestion and the west window from being blocked by the organ and

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE 2



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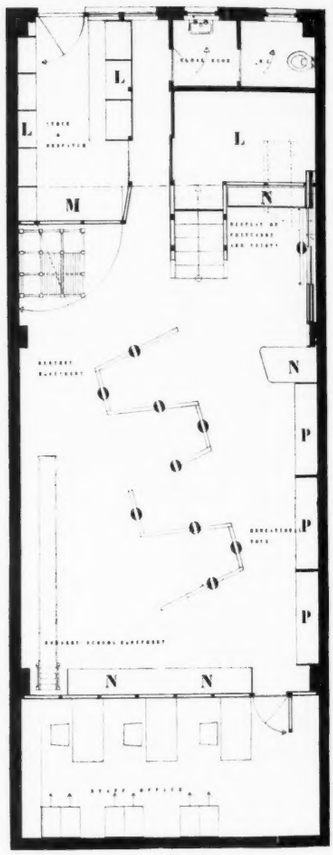

BASEMENT

5

ERNÖ GOLDFINGER AND G. W. FLOWER

its equipment. The choir will no longer dominate, and when performing will lead the congregation but not do its work. The lofty narthex that this planning allows is separated from the nave by a great arch, but the nave and sanctuary are continuous, separated only by the communion rail. The building stands on reinforced concrete piles 20 ft. deep. The exterior, 1 (overleaf), dominated by the great western tower, is faced with 2 in. pinkish grey bricks, with ½ in. joints in lime mortar mixed with red Parbold sand. The embellishments are in Portland stone, carved by H. Tyson Smith. The roof of the nave, seen in the side view, 2, is covered with sea-green glazed pantiles. 3, the sanctuary and reredos—the latter with sculpture by W. L. Stevenson. The paving outside is of concrete flags, 2 ft. square. The doors are of waxed oak.

This shop in Wimpole Street, London, is for the sale of nursery equipment, toys, books for children and nursery school outfits for indoors and outdoors, manufactured by the owners. Both small objects, such as toys or books, and large ones, like climbing frames, swings and furniture, had to find a right place in the show window and shop. The shop is located in a narrow and rather busy street. For this reason the main window was set back 7 ft. from the building line. This creates a porch where potential customers can inspect the display of goods at their leisure. Three distinct show windows were made ; on the two sides, B on the plan, are shown small objects, books, etc., and in the centre, protected by glass going down to the floor, the main show window, D, which extends in depth if necessary to the back end of the shop and is limited in practice by screens in front of which the objects are displayed. Nearest to

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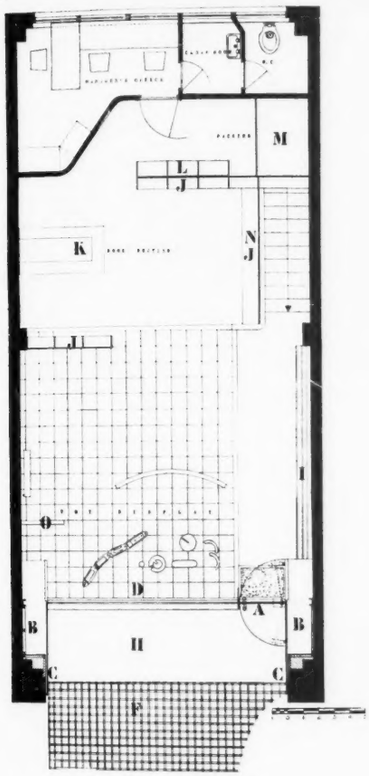
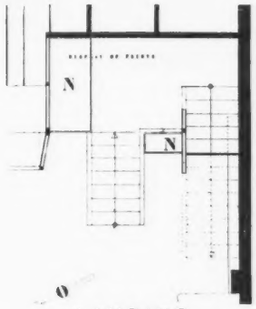
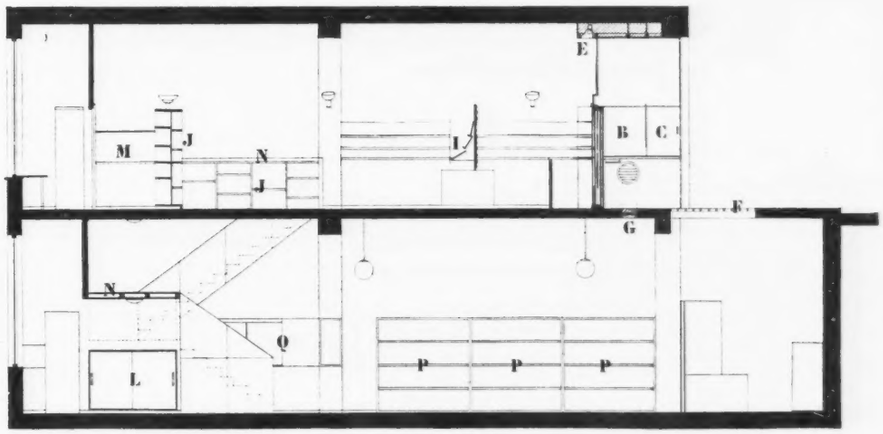


GROUND FLOOR



LANDING



SECTION

the pavement on the two side pillars are arranged cork backgrounds, C, for advertisements, prints, etc. Access to the shop is by a plate-glass door without a frame, having only a top and bottom rail and hung on an automatic self-closing pivot. The front of the shop is devoted to the sale of small toys ; farther back is the book section. Still farther back is the packing table, M, with a small stock cupboard, L. This cupboard conceals the manager's office and cloak-room. The lighting of the whole ground floor showroom is indirect, by four asymmetrical reflectors and one symmetrical reflector. On the landing a table, N, is provided for display purposes. There is a general view from this landing over the main part of the basement. The basement is divided into three parts: the room for display and sale ; a staff office, which is situated under the pavement lights and specially ventilated ; and a stock and dispatch room. The display room is equipped with movable screens, O, 6 ft. by 3 ft., which are hinged together and can be taken apart and set up in various ways. There is a special fitment, Q, for showing and stocking several thousand postcards in a rather restricted space. Movable shelving, P, for small objects is provided along one wall. 4, the exterior. 5, looking through the main show window from the inside of the shop. 6, at the foot of the staircase leading down to the basement. 7, a detail of the entrance door, showing the side show window. The letters on the plans and section indicate parts as follows : A, door ; B, showcase ; C, poster frame ; D, show window ; E, soffit lighting ; F, pavement lights ; G, ventilation; H, lobby ; I, display shelves ; J, bookcases ; K, book display ; L, stores ; M, packing table ; N, display table ; O, 6 ft. by 3 ft. standard screens ; P, shelving for small toys ; Q, post-card display element.

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE

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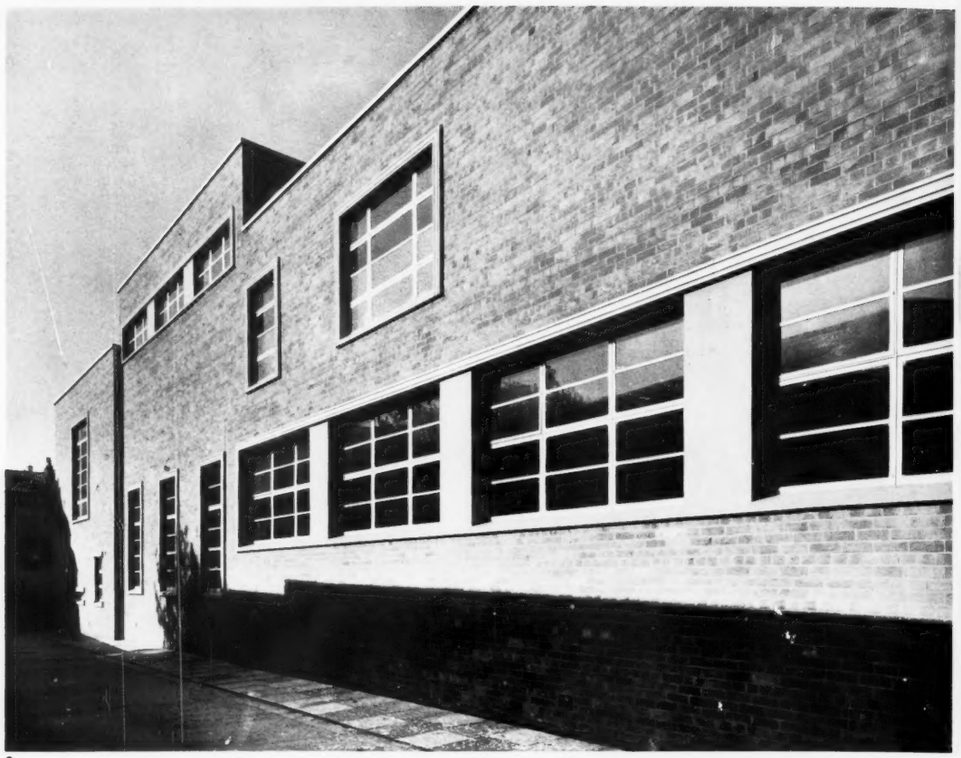

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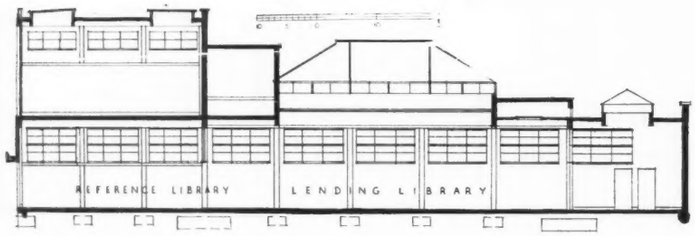
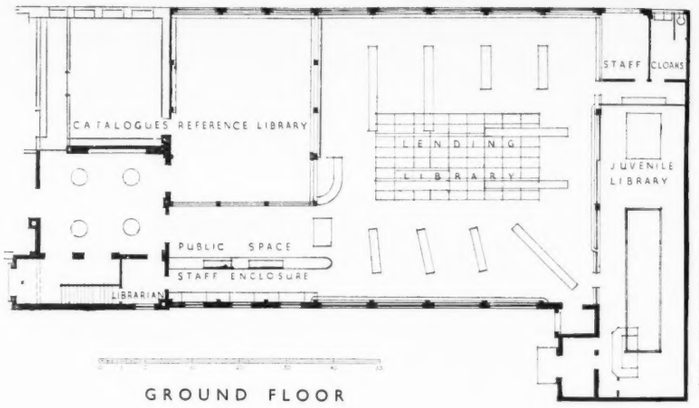
J. PATON WATSON

(G. W. ALDERSON, ASSISTANT)



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



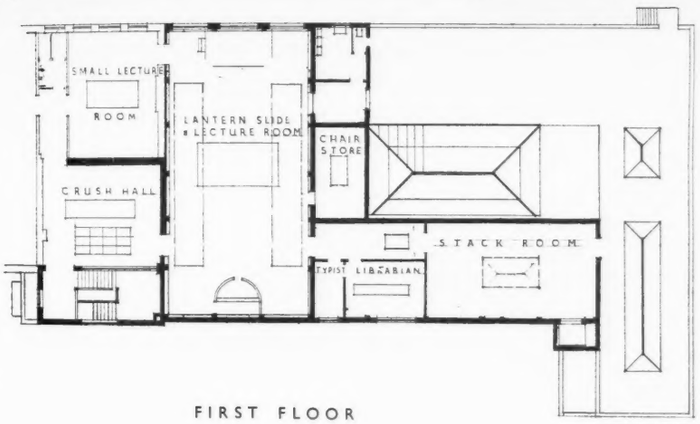
GROUND FLOOR

This extension of the Scarborough Public Library had to include a lending library with island and wall book-cases for 18,000 volumes, a reference library, a junior library for 3,000 volumes, a lecture or exhibition room seating 260 people, another smaller lecture room and a stock room to store 12,000 volumes. This accommodation is arranged on two floors as shown in the plans. The building is a steel frame one, with concrete covering to the frame, which supports reinforced concrete hollow tile floors. On the exterior, 8, the panel walls are faced with 2-in. brickwork in cement. 9, the entrance hall, showing the doors leading to the reference library and to the lending library. The walls here and throughout the building are rendered in water-repellent cement, finished in hard plaster. 10, a general view of the reference library. 11, the lending library, showing the service counter. The three libraries, reference, lending and junior, are subdivided by glazed screens and book-case fittings. The wall between the reference and lending libraries has an internal core of

9

10

11



FIRST FLOOR

12

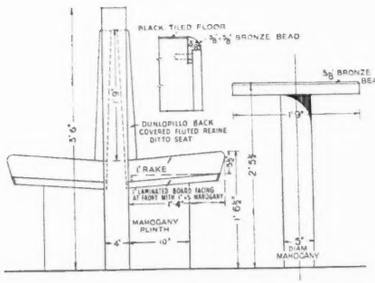
sound-proofing board between the backs of the book-cases to restrict the passage of sound from the lending library. The floors have $\frac{9}{16}$ in. cork tiles in random shades. The service counter in the lending library, seen in the foreground in 11, is designed to facilitate rapid discharging of books with minimum staff movements. Of the three service points, two are for the discharge of returned books, and the third for miscellaneous enquiries. Readers' tickets are arranged on trays on a movable platform manipulated by the assistant seated at the service point. Readers return their books to one or other of the two service points according to the colour of the last dating—black or red. Turnstiles are provided and books recorded at a special exit counter so placed that its staff can oversee the whole library. The library tables are circular, with olive-green linoleum composition tops. They have a raised centre portion in birch, to form a book rest and display stand. 12, the exhibition and lecture hall on the first floor.

CURRENT

4 MISHA BLACK AND WALTER LANDAUER

13

14



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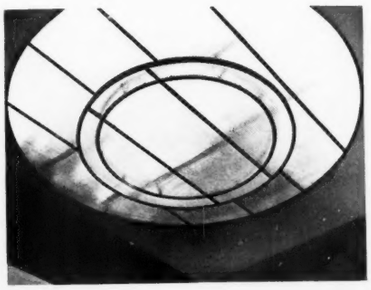

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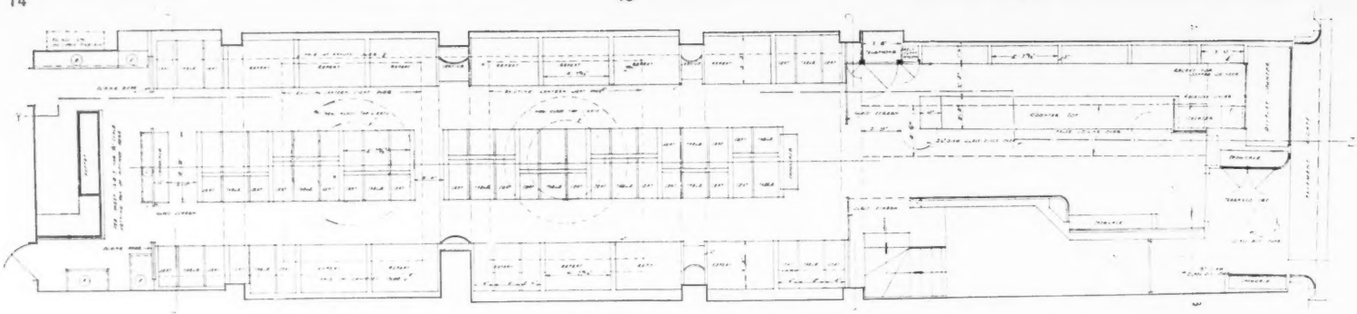
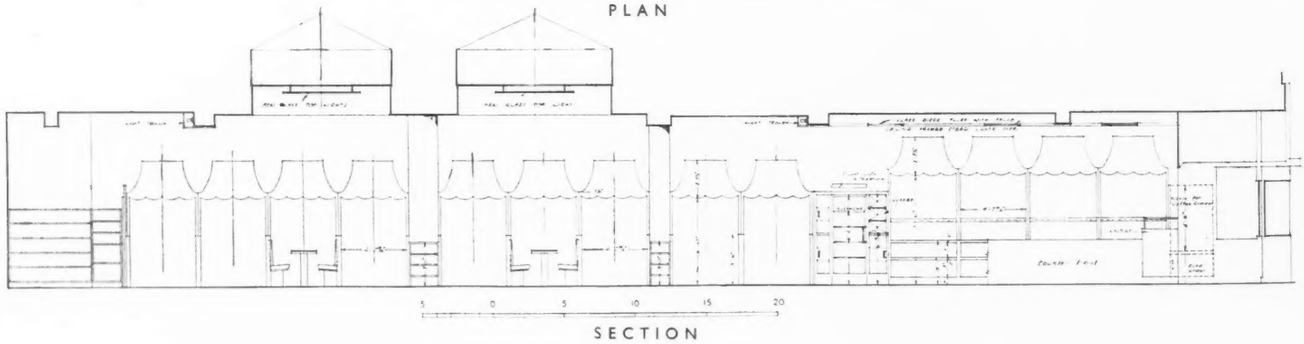


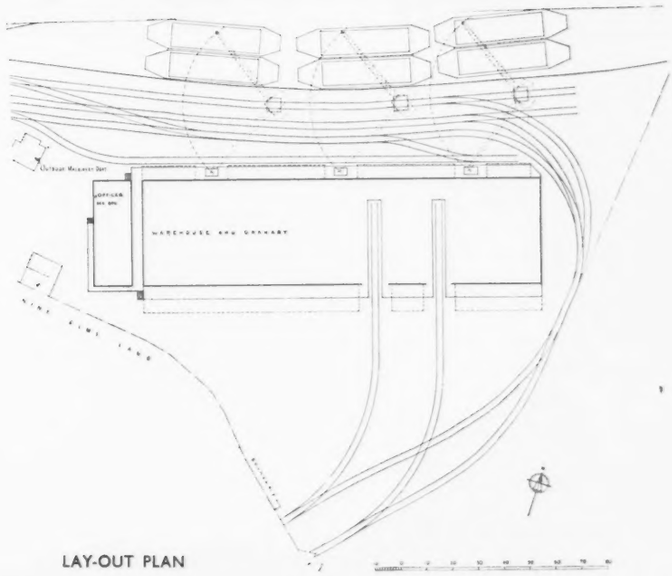
PLAN



SECTION

This job consisted in the re-design of the shop-front and ground floor of a café in Piccadilly. The problem set to the architects was to retain the "dignified" atmosphere of the old café, and retain also an atmosphere reminiscent of tea- and coffee-growing countries without directly imitating an eastern style of decoration. The old shop-front, 13, is shown, as well as the new, 14. Another limitation was that the landlords insisted on the old cornice line and pilaster line and size being retained. The new shop-front is of teak, used both solid and as a $\frac{3}{8}$ in. veneer. All metal-work is of solid bronze, dark toned. The interiors of the windows are Honduras mahogany. The neon lighting of the lettering is red, and the actual neon tubing opal, which allows the sign to be read when not illuminated. The interior is planned with built-in tables and seats, 15 (also shown in the sketch above). The table tops are covered with dull buff tiles and the seats upholstered with rubber cushioning covered with red leather cloth. The latter is fluted, the flutes being hair padded to prevent rucking or creasing. Natural lighting is obtained through circular glass lay-lights, 16, behind which are floodlights for night illumination.

5 OSCAR FABER



LAY-OUT PLAN

17

This warehouse at Nine Elms, for the Southern Railway, is for the storage of grain and general goods. It is 310 ft. long by 80 ft. wide and 100 ft. high at the three towers. The ground floor is arranged at platform level. A rail siding is provided along the river-side front of the building, with an external platform 10 ft. wide under a canopy. This platform contains three platform weighers which can be reached by the cranes on the wharf-side through gaps in the canopies. On the south side of the building, 17, a similar platform is provided for road traffic, and two sidings from a level crossing in Nine Elms Lane are brought into the building so that goods may be loaded inside the building entirely under cover (see lay-out plan). The whole of the ground floor and first floor are finished in granolithic and are available for general merchandise. There are four more storage floors above this of solid 4 in. planks of Columbian pine with maple finish 1 in. thick, available for grain storage. The building site consisted of about 40 ft. thickness of made ground overlying blue clay, and the whole building is carried on 800 reinforced concrete piles. These are approximately 50 ft. long, 16 ins. square, and carry a load of 70 tons each.

CURRENT ARCHITECTURE
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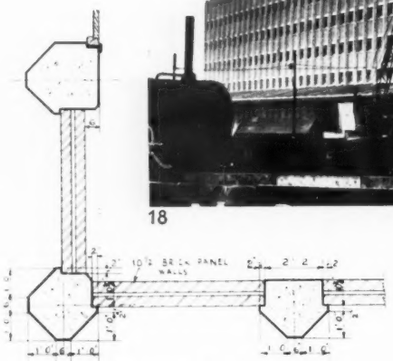
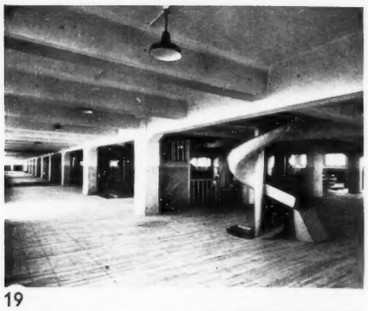

TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION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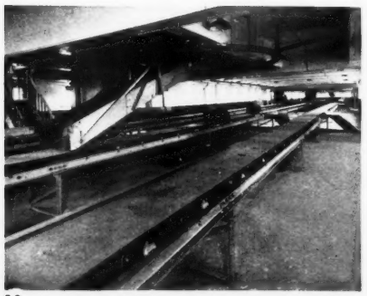
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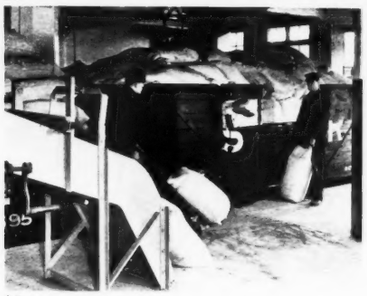
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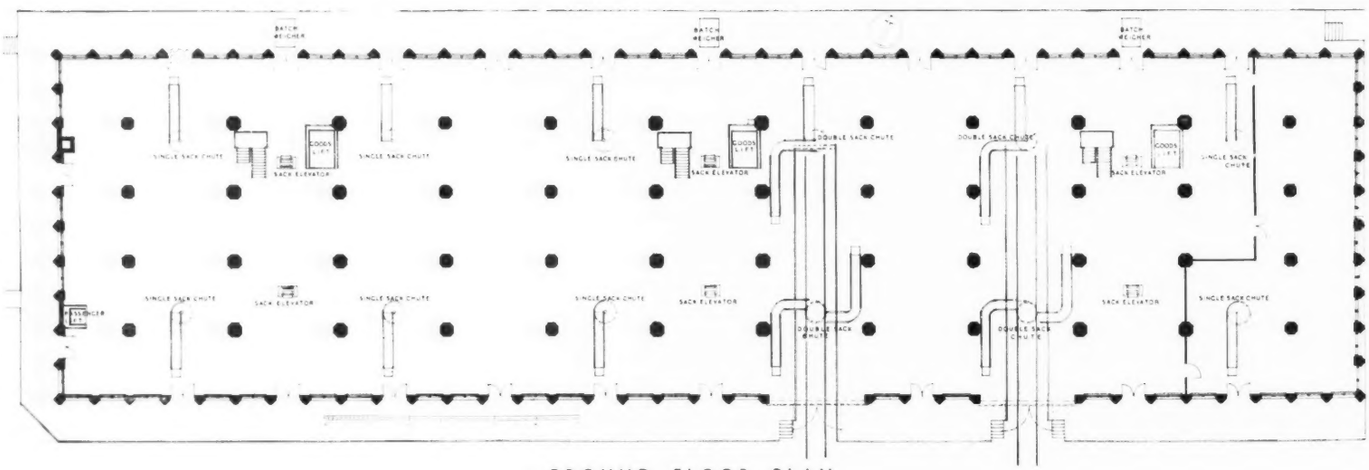

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The whole building is of reinforced concrete for the beams and columns, and all the windows are of wood with hardwood transoms and cills, and are arranged for glazing from the inside. The openings in the windows are arranged so that the whole of the outside surface of the windows can be reached from inside the building. The panel walls are 11 in. cavity walls of red brick with stainless steel ties. Above the general roof level (70 ft. above ground) all the construction is of concrete, and consists of a longitudinal conveyor gallery 280 ft. long intersected by three towers which contain the elevator heads and lifts gear. The building is very fully equipped with a complete mechanical handling plant to reduce the man handling of goods to the minimum. Goods arriving by river are lifted by the wharf cranes and placed either on the ground floor platform, or alternatively may be loaded direct to the upper floors by means of loop-hole-doors, provided in five positions on each floor on the river side. Grain in bags is received on the ground floor, from where it is taken by either of six vertical sack elevators to any floor above. Where the grain is required to be taken to another portion of the building not immediately above the reception point, the bags are carried up in the elevator and discharged on to one of three reversible band conveyors on the 6th floor, which take it to one of the twelve spiral chutes which discharge to any floor in any part of the building. Four of the twelve spiral chutes are twin chutes, and these are located where the sidings come into the building, and allow grain to be discharged on either side on trucks standing in the sidings. 18, the building from across the railway. 19, one of the grain-storage floors with spiral chute. 20, the conveyor band and distributor chute. 21, loading into railway trucks inside the building.

MINOR MASTERS OF THE XIXth CENTURY

Notes on some lesser-known architects

VIII. Herbert P. Horne

The Critic as Artist

By Dudley Harbron

The artist is the creator of beautiful things.
To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.
The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, OSCAR WILDE.

If Wilde, writing the dialogue between Gilbert and Ernest which bears my borrowed title, had required a model for one of his talkers, he need not have searched beyond the subject of this memoir. That is not to say that Horne was like either of the two disputants. The resemblance lies in the range of his interests and the charm of his prose. He was, in fact, the critic as artist.

Now Wilde was born in 1854, and did not write his essay until 1890; whereas Horne was born in 1864, and was already a critic in the eighties. Thus it will be noted that Horne has the advantage over Wilde at both extremes in time. But this is to anticipate events.

Herbert Percy Horne was born in Chelsea. His father, Horace Horne, was a gentleman with a liking for collecting artistic things. His mother had been a Miss Porter of Russell Square, the daughter of a surveyor. As a boy he was sent to St. Paul's School, City of London, where he learned much Latin. It is quite clear that he learned other things not taught at any academy, or by any schoolmaster, for he was an embryo poet, artist and critic, before he left school.

Still, poetry and art are poor means of sustenance in so-called civilized society and, if they needs must out, it is to be preferred that they have behind them a substantial occupation. Sensible Victorian parents saw to this, more especially when they had before them the objective warning of the consequence of permitting the young to become enthralled by art—as William Morris; a gentleman lately turned Socialist. So the boy was entered in the office of Robert Vigers, Surveyor, of Old Jewry, and no doubt his mother felt that the family honour would be saved.

But as providentially happens when youth has anything to communicate, the message contrives to find the means of expression notwithstanding initial false moves. Young Horne could draw and write, and he wanted to draw and write to some purpose. He was now nearing his seventeenth year. In polite society the æsthetic movement was the cult of the moment. Encouraged by Pater, adopted by Wilde and lampooned by Du Maurier, it was at least an indication that at length Victorian values were being questioned. Horne was at a susceptible age.

It was then that, attracted by some designs of Mr. A. H. Mackmurdo's, he became anxious to obtain an introduction to their author. When this meeting was brought about the young aspirant asked the artist to give him some practical instruction. Thus it befell that a year later Horne attended Mackmurdo for some private lessons in architectural drawing and general design. It was soon evident to his teacher that his student had a marked gift for the invention of ornament and decoration. Eventually, in 1883, Horne decided to exchange surveying for architecture, and with that aim in view became a pupil of his former part-time instructor.

That gentleman had lately formed a group of associated craftsmen who worked together under the style of *The Century Guild*. The aim of the Guild was "to render all branches of Art the sphere no longer of the tradesman, but of the artist." In addition to their collaboration upon such building works as their founder had in progress, workshops were opened for the manufacture of the furniture and fabrics designed, and a shop for their sale; and in order to provide a platform from which to address the public the members of the Guild planned a quarterly magazine, *The Hobby Horse*. The first number, afterwards suppressed, appeared on April 1st, 1884. The cover was from a fine design by Selwyn Image, the friend of the editor, Mackmurdo. To this number Herbert Horne contributed the frontispiece, a drawing representing two figures, the one recumbent, and the other standing. This last holds the moon, and directs a whirlwind, against a background of stars, comets and northern lights. It is illustrative of part of the artist's own poem, *The Praise*—

Love, I cannot hold thee longer,
In the deep night sink away:

The drawing and the poem reveal him to have been at that time under the spell of William Blake. They show him also to be more advanced as a draughtsman than matured as a poet: though equally ambitious in the two arts. The poem is not easy to interpret. It is, as the editor remarked, full of difficulty. None-the-less the budding poet was allowed to sun himself in anticipation of his eventual blossoming.

Meantime, Horne continued to study the mysteries of architectural design under Mackmurdo. Although he tried hard he never succeeded in mastering the science of building construction. It was in the choice of the best from among several alternatives, in the construction of patterns and the design of decoration, that he excelled. By the first he exercised his critical faculty, and to some extent also through the latter, for as a designer he was susceptible to the influence of those artists whose work he admired. He was able to weave from their threads fresh patterns.

In 1885 Horne entered into partnership with his principal. Next year *The Hobby Horse* reappeared. It reappeared with the original cover by Selwyn Image, but with a larger page and a lighter type. It was now edited by Horne and Selwyn Image. This time it ran for several years.

There has hardly been published any periodical which had so remarkable a list of contributors. In its pages Arthur Burgess, Selwyn Image, Burne-Jones, Watts, William Strang figure as illustrators, and there are also unique reproductions of the work of Blake and Rossetti; while the writers, in addition to the editors, were Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, John Ruskin, J. A. Symonds, Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, and others whose names are yet familiar. The format, the clarity of the type, the paper, the illustrations, the quality of the contents, combine to make this quarterly unique. It was a pioneer of the art of good printing.

Now it was in this paper that Herbert Horne revealed the power he had over the written word and the taste he had for the arrangement of the page. The whole of his many contributions are distinguished by the beauty of his expression and the thoughtfulness of his words; and when it is remembered that he was not yet twenty-two years old it must be admitted that they are remarkably mature.

Writing about architecture afforded him an opportunity to exercise both of the complementary parts of his nature.

One of his poems is dedicated to Inigo Jones—*On certain New Buildings in Covent Garden*, and his first lengthy essay is upon the work of that sturdy man—*A study of certain Buildings designed by Inigo Jones*. Their titles also indicate a preference for comprehensiveness, a characteristic which he seems to have had to the end. The essay is rather obviously based upon a prolonged study of such of the works, drawings, documentary and printed evidence as has survived the years. Such a theme demands a close adherence to the facts, but where he permits himself any latitude, he writes in the graceful style which pervades his prose.

"The Elizabethans were perpetually striving to regain this departed temper, and re-create the old Gothic under the semblance of Ionic pilasters and egregious arabesques. That was impossible: for Gothic was as much the unconscious expression of the Middle Ages as were the Temples of Athens of the Ancient Greek souls. Jones instinctively knew this. He knew also that architecture to him must ever be the effort of an individual, not the outcome of an age, and his art must therefore be eminently traditional or Classic. Now the great law of Classic, or traditional architecture, is the predominance of the horizontal over the vertical lines; while that of Gothic, or spontaneous architecture, is the ascendency of the vertical over the horizontal; for Classic, with its lines stretching over the earth, was the architecture of enjoyment; Gothic, with its spires and thousand pinnacles the architecture of aspiration."

Horne's style was attuned to the subject matter with which he dealt, and as this subject matter was various so was his manner. In his early writing he ranged from *Thoughts toward a criticism of the Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, through notes on the poems, prose and pictures of William Blake to slight amusing essays on many themes. The essay on Rossetti holds the reader throughout. It is the most brilliant of the many on the subject of the poet's work. Horne belonged to the æsthetic movement only to the extent that he was particularly careful about his manner of expression. Though in a moment of forgetfulness he did say, "Art must

would wish: In diebus illis non erat Rex in Israel, sed unusquisque quod sibi rectum videbatur, hoc faciebat. *Concluded.*
HERBERT P. HORNE.

Headpiece to this article: a woodcut illustration by Horne from an issue of "The Hobby Horse" of 1889. *Above, a tail-piece from the same magazine, drawn by Horne.*

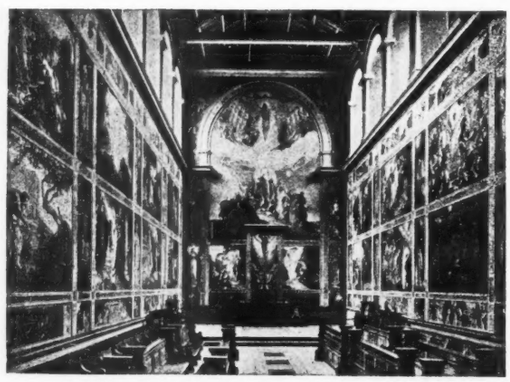
exist for its own sake, as an expression and ornament of life." In reality he was of an earlier era.

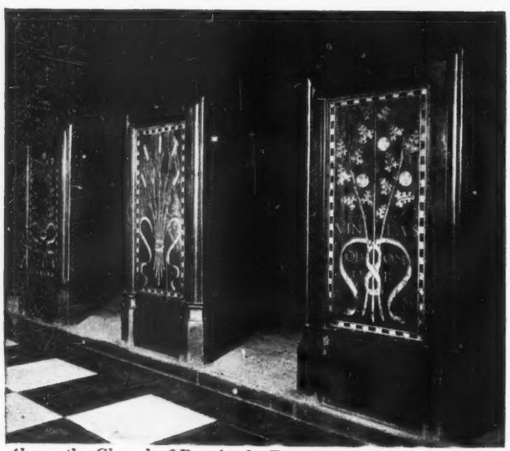
A few years later he wrote an admirable account of the Life and Works of James Gibbs. And moreover gave two lengthy explanations of his attitude towards art and architecture. In these he desired a return to the condition of oneness of the arts as contributing to architecture or issuing from architecture; and in his readers a "fine interest," in contradistinction to Emile Zola's "disinterest."

The initial letters in *The Hobby Horse* were most of them designed by Horne. They range from what in 1885 was deemed fashionable. These are the least satisfactory. Some of the many others are in the manner of Morris, a few appear to be traceable to the treatment of leaves by Botticelli, and there are others, the most successful, which are his own invention. The tail-pieces are almost as diverse as the initials, and they follow much in the same path, the one having in the first instance been designed in harmony with the other.

Prose was not his only mode of expression in words. Many poems were written by him. In this medium he very soon emancipated himself from the influence exerted by his early study of Blake. He developed a slightly cynical manner of his own. Some of these poems were collected in a little grey-backed book styled *Diversi Colores*.

In addition to his writing and editorship Horne was still employed as an architect. The designs for the foliated inlays of the bench ends of the Baptistry of St. Luke's, Camberwell, are his work, the whole being a creation of the Guild.





Above, the Chapel of Rest in the Bayswater Road, London, of which Horne was the architect, with wall paintings by Frederick Shields; and the bench ends which Horne designed at St. Luke's Church, Camberwell.

Moreover he designed many patterns for fabrics.

It is with the Church of the Ascension, Bayswater, that his name is chiefly associated. In the Spring of '82, Mrs. Russell Gurney confided to Frederick Shields, a member of the Century Guild, that it was her ambition to build a Chapel of Rest in memory of her husband, late Recorder of London. Some years passed before a suitable site could be found, and when at length it was suggested in '88, that the disused burial ground and chapel of St. George's, Hanover Square, Bayswater Road, should be used, many interests had to be placated before the project could be commenced.

It was not until January 1st, 1889, that Shields and Horne met upon the site and discussed the possibilities. From the first it had been the intention of Mrs. Gurney that the building should be the background for the work of Frederick Shields, an artist some of whose cartoons she had acquired, and for whose painting she had great admiration. On Mackmurdo's suggestion Horne and Shields visited Northern Italy to study and sketch the church interiors in Verona and Assisi. On their return Horne set to work upon the preparation of the drawings in conjunction with his partner. As the chapel was the setting for the pictures it was designed inside first, "not the reverse way as with most modern buildings."

The contract was commenced in 1890, the structure was completed four years later, but it was not until 1910 that the decorations by Frederick Shields were finished. Most of them were on canvas strained over a slate background.

About this time the partnership with Mackmurdo was dissolved. Horne had decided to devote his whole energy to writing and collecting. As part of his self-training Horne had for a long time searched for drawings and pictures by the masters among the litter of second-hand dealers. It is said that he got two drawings by Michelangelo at 1*d*. each. When but a youth he had found a sketch portrait of William Blake by the poet-artist's wife. Though he was like most collectors, poor, he gathered together a distinguished collection of beautiful things. He was able to do this because he had made himself the greatest authority of his time upon the several subjects in which he was interested. Moreover, he exchanged in part the second best for the best.

His passion for collecting had in its first shape shown itself by the collection of information. He compiled catalogues of the *Engraved Portraits and Fancy Subjects painted by Thomas Gainsborough, and George Romney*. He wrote a book on *The Binding of Books* which is a text-book on the history of the subject.

At the commencement of the century he retired to Florence where he immersed himself in the composition of the master work of his life—*The Life of Botticelli*. This occupied most of the next seven years. He occasionally found time to throw off some fragment of critical comment upon the work of the great masters.

The remaining seven years of his life were occupied in the purchase of the Palazzo Fossi, Florence, a building attributed to Guiliano da Sangallo. When at last it became his property he moved in and made some alterations and additions in order that his collection of furniture, drawings, pictures, gems, bronzes and books should have a fitting setting. These arranged, he was content to retire to the attic where, surrounded by unreadable books, he reclined in a dilapidated basket chair. He only lived to enjoy his setting for a year. Passing from men before his due time on April 28th, 1916, it was found that he had bequeathed the Palace and its contents to the city of Florence.

THE FOR

BY JOHN GLOAG

Forcible individualism was a characteristic of English mediæval sculpture*. It was expressed by an ability to give to things carved in stone and wood a spiritual content that endowed them with a vigorous and sometimes malevolent life of their own. Saints, fiends and heraldic beasts had passion and power; an air of possessing vast resources of good and evil, held in reserve, ready to flame out of control and to melt their rigid material forms into flesh and muscle. Such sculpture is as different from the staid naturalism of Roman civilization as Gothic architecture is different from the standardized classic orders that were spread throughout the Empire.

The Province of Britain had its interminable array of Corinthian and Doric columns, its acanthus leaves and all the mass-produced ornamental conventions of Rome; but occasionally this most westerly of the provinces had something else—a touch of individualism, a foretaste of mediæval forcefulness, a rebellious disregard for naturalistic conventions. This was the Celtic genius asserting itself; taking short-cuts to fling a meaning at observers, a shorthand of symbolism that the educated Roman would call "barbarian," and leave unread, and which is often unread or misread by the modern archæologist. There are two pieces of Romano-British sculpture which have mediæval affinities, and which show that the latent gifts of native sculptors were striving for release from the framework of Roman artistic standards. The first is the Corbridge Lion, which was found in the largest house excavated at the Roman Station of Corstopitum (Corbridge), in Northumberland. A few hundred yards up the road from the site you will find in a room in a large gate-house that straddles the drive to a private house this sculptured fountain-head—perhaps one of the most interesting and instructive objects recovered by excavation during the last hundred years. You pay sixpence for the privilege of trying to examine this antique. It is on the floor, under a window, against the light, and by going down on your hands and knees you can begin to appreciate its extraordinary animation.

Mr. Eric Birley, the author of the scholarly official guide to Corbridge

[Continued on page 35]

* This short article may be regarded as a pendant to the long one by John Piper, called "England's Early Sculptors," which appeared in the October issue. That dealt chiefly with the twelfth century, but drew attention to the same characteristics of vigour and conviction, typical of primitive art.

RERUNNERS

A

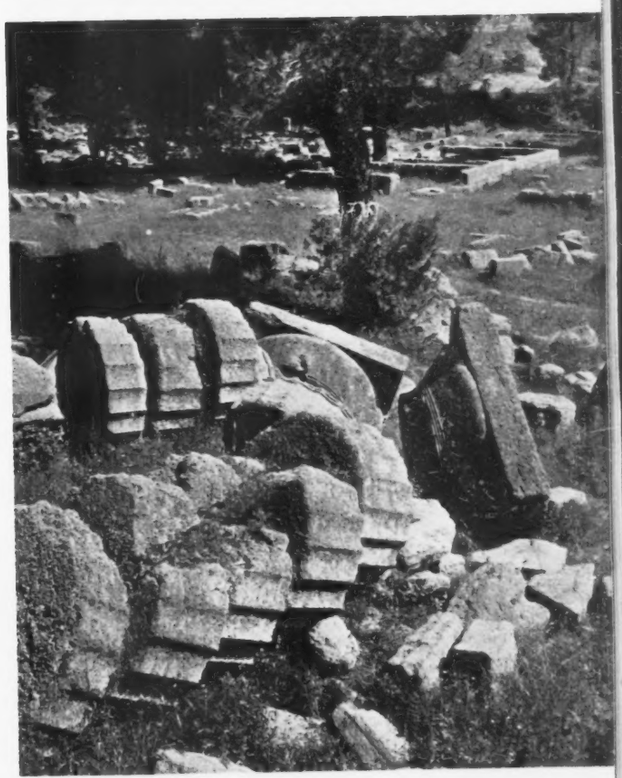
H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE

B

MELTON BROS.

C

A vigorous, and sometimes malevolent, life of their own: A, "The Corbridge Lion" from the Roman Station of Corstopitum (Northumberland). B, Carved oak lion from the choir stalls at Lincoln C, The Gorgon head carved in stone in the pediment of the Roman Temple of Sul at Bath.



The Temple of Zeus at Olympia was built in the second half of the 5th century B.C. and overthrown by an earthquake early in the Christian era. These photographs of fallen columns and of the capital of one of them—the latter, carved from one block of limestone, showing the gigantic scale—were taken, together with those overleaf, this summer, by George Trevelyan.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN GREECE

PHOTOGRAPHY IN GREECE

Modern shipbuilding in the harbour of the tyrant Polycrates; Tiganyi, Isle of Samos. The shipbuilding tradition must have been passed down little changed since Homeric times; some of the smaller boats are still built with a ram prow. The timber, a kind of Scotch fir grown on the island, is all sawn by hand and shaped with an adze, the lines of the ship being judged largely by eye. Also, below, a Greco-Roman house in Delos—the atrium, or open court, on to which the living-rooms opened. Fluting of the columns was clearly intended but never executed. It was the custom to complete the capitals first, and flute the drums when in position.

Roman Station,* describes it as ". . . a rugged piece of work, in which a popular Roman *motif*—a lion devouring a stag—has been treated uncouthly but impressively by a local sculptor who can hardly have seen a real lion." But this is not to be judged by realistic standards. It breaks away from them—deliberately. There is an intensity of movement in this work: the lion's mane is still torn by the speed-made wind of the chase; there is panting satisfaction in the mask and growling appetite; a pose of bloody possession arches the body and plants the fore-paws on the limp food that awaits those jaws. It is everything a lion ought to be: it symbolizes lionhood. Even if the sculptor were familiar with lions—and he may well have been, for there were amphitheatres in Britain where games were held—he might have elected to take one of those short-cuts to characterization which distinguish mediæval art.

The counterpart of the Corbridge Lion stares back at you from choir-stalls and corbels and capitals in many English cathedrals. There is a carved oak lion in Lincoln which has the same lurking strenuousness, the same crouching ferocity.

The second piece of Romano-British sculpture that is violently out of tune with its time and akin to the art of the Middle Ages, is the bearded Gorgon head on the tympanum of a pediment from the Temple of Sul at Bath. This is a nightmare face; a writhing fury, implacably malignant. Professor R. G. Collingwood, in his newly-published work on *Roman Britain*, suggests that we cannot be sure that it is British, "for a Gaulish sculptor from Chartres has recorded his presence at Bath, and the pediment may be his." Even so, its appearance at Bath, which was in the richer, more elaborately civilized part of the Province, suggests that Romano-British citizens found such vigour acceptable.

These hints of spiritual and artistic revolution in Britain a thousand years before mediæval civilization was in full bloom suggest the permanence of certain national gifts. We are a nation of heretics: we even produced one in the fourth century, Pelagius, who advocated a form of individualism that gave a lot of trouble to organized Christianity. Like those Romano-British sculptors, he believed in freedom in a world unprepared for that gift.

* *Corbridge Roman Station* (*Corstopitum*). By Eric Birley. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office. 1936. 6d. net.

Book of the Month

The Lure of the Antique

By Osbert Lancaster

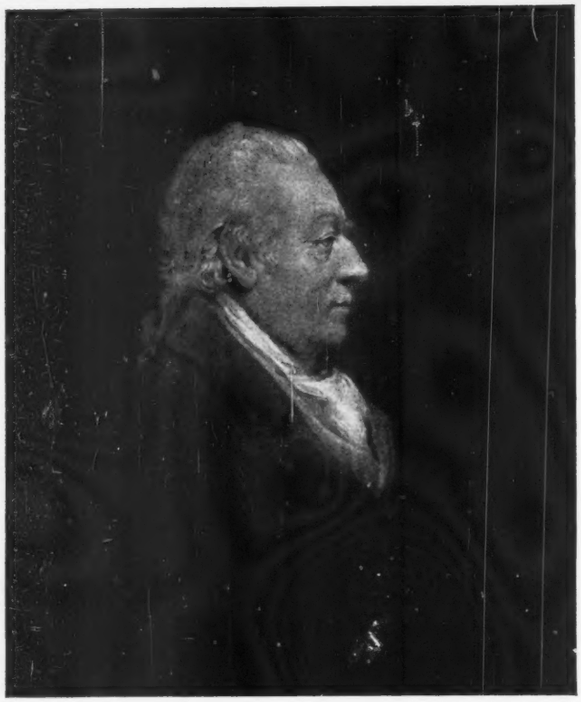
JAMES WYATT, ARCHITECT, 1746–1813. By Anthony Dale, B.A., B.Litt. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Price 12s. 6d. net.

It can with a considerable show of justification be maintained that the period covered by the life of George III was the one in which English culture and civilization reached their highest level. Happy in the possession of a standardized idiom, creative artists could then allow themselves a freedom which in its absence would have proved disastrous.

The career of James Wyatt, who for the greater part of this period was its most popular architect, is therefore of an interest quite out of proportion with his actual merits. Judged by the most exacting standards, Wyatt never came near to being a great architect; even in his own day there were many better. Nothing that he produced is comparable to the younger Dance's work at Newgate, or that of Sir William Chambers at his best, but so long as he was content to abide by the rule of taste his work, if frequently uninspired, was always meritorious. It was not until he went chasing after strange gods that his defects became disastrously apparent. For alone of all the architects of his time who were induced to try their hand at the Gothic, Wyatt was enthusiastic, and the one quality that renders tolerable any type of revival is detachment. Chambers could go building Chinese pagodas with complete impunity because he was never for a moment under any illusion as to exactly what he was doing and could even accomplish a little gentle Gothicizing, as at Milton, with comparatively satisfactory results, but Wyatt, alas, was under the impression that he possessed a particular aptitude for, and sympathy with, Gothic architecture, which would safely enable him to abandon the classical idiom and which would provide an adequate substitute for a complete absence of knowledge. Had Wyatt been an architect of the stature of Wren or even of Vanbrugh he might safely have embarked upon these dangerous exotic seas, for it is the peculiarity of genius to be able to transcend contemporary limitations, but, as it was, he was bound inevitably to founder as soon as he was out of sight of the old familiar landmarks. It was his tragedy that he was expressly intended by nature, if ever man was, to cultivate his own garden, and yet he was filled with an irresistible longing to go and dig in the Gothic cabbage-patch next door, which, under other circumstances, he might have done with the greatest success for, as Mr. Kenneth Clark has pointed out, "Had Gothic been the natural language of his time Wyatt would have been a greater architect."

A life of this interesting figure, who was representative of so many aspects of the age in which he lived and who aroused such furious indignation in the breasts of his successors, has long been needed. It is therefore the more regrettable that Mr. Dale's book cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory. In the preface he informs us that he felt bound to lay stress on the historical rather than the architectural side of Wyatt's career, as, in the first place, his book was written as a thesis to be submitted to the Modern History board at Oxford, and, in the second, his knowledge of (and one suspects interest in) architecture left him no choice. One is tempted to ask why, then, did he select Wyatt as a suitable subject for those researches with the diligence of which he hoped to impress the examiners? For apart from his work Wyatt's life was neither remarkable in itself nor remotely interesting historically, and as Mr. Dale himself admits, on page 108, of his private life little can now be ascertained. Of the energy and skill with which the author has pursued his researches one would be more convinced were there not a singular omission in the chapter dealing with Wyatt's most celebrated work. In the account of the building of Fonthill and all the complicated negotiations connected therewith, one looks in vain for any indication that the author has consulted, or is even aware of the existence of, the Hamilton Papers. His treatment of the relations of Wyatt and Beckford is, therefore, considerably less enlightening than Dr. Oliver's. On the subject of Fonthill itself he inclines to the generally accepted view that it was a masterpiece of its kind and a completely successful work of art: an opinion which, despite its general popularity, has little unbiased evidence to support it. That the tower subsequently collapsed may or may not be regarded as an architectural fault, but the fact that from the start it appeared to several contemporary observers as being eminently likely to do so, most certainly is. Moreover, in assessing the magnificence of the effect it created, too little allowance has surely been made for the skill and imagination of the romantic engravers (one has only to compare the illustrations in a book such as Bulwer's *Pilgrims of the Rhine* with the actual buildings therein depicted to realize the extent of the imaginative flights of which contemporary artists were capable) and insufficient attention paid to the wretched quality of the scant remains and the opinions of contemporaries which, on Mr. Dale's own showing, were mostly unfavourable. On the vexed question of who first encouraged Wyatt to interest himself in Gothic, the author sheds no new light, but inclines to the opinion, rejected by Mr. Clark, that it was Horace Walpole. The only objection to this theory is, surely, that Horace Walpole, had he been responsible for introducing an architect for whom he had so great an admiration to the style of which he was the acknowledged apologist, would almost certainly have made some direct reference to his triumph.

But it is not his own original Gothic work which made Wyatt so prominent and so



James Wyatt, a portrait by his son, Mathew Cotes Wyatt. From "James Wyatt, architect: 1746 - 1813."

equivocal a figure, but his restorations of the genuine article; it was his work on the cathedrals which aroused the alarm of contemporary antiquaries and made his name a byword to the next generation of architects. Here Mr. Dale is on far safer ground and the chapter in which he deals with Wyatt's activities in this sphere is by far the most satisfactory part of the book. He had no need to adopt the slightly apologetic tone with which he introduces his list of the alterations undertaken by Wyatt, for although it may, as he says, be dull reading, it is exactly what is wanted. For a long time it has been known that the misdeeds of many others have been attributed to Wyatt, whom the hatred and contempt of the ecclesiologists had rendered so notorious that any liberty might safely be taken with his reputation. Now at last we are provided with all the data necessary to arrive at an estimate of exactly how serious and how extensive were his alterations at various cathedrals, and how far they justified the later revivalists' opinion of Wyatt. On the whole he emerges, if not wholly unspotted, at least no worse than many of his detractors. Of the besetting sin of Sir Gilbert Scott, a tireless energy in making the whole fabric of any one church conform to the style of a particular period of Gothic, usually thirteenth century, he was guiltless; for his removal of the Hungerford and Beauchamp chapels at Salisbury was undertaken, not because they were the only portions of the cathedral that were in the Perpendicular Style (I fancy Mr. Dale somewhat exaggerates the contempt for the Perpendicular prevailing at that period), but by the fact that they were in a ruinous condition and that it was almost impossible to render safe the outside walls of the Lady Chapel so long as they remained *in situ*. As a restorer his chief faults were carelessness (he was too prone to leave as much of the work as possible to the clerk of the works) and an unfortunate enthusiasm for theatrical effect which led him to pull down anything which interfered with the vista from the west end.

The commendable thoroughness with which the author deals with this part of his subject's career does not, unfortunately, extend to his treatment of Wyatt's classical achievements. The reason for this may perhaps be that Mr. Dale has little sympathy, or, indeed, knowledge, of classical architecture, a conclusion which his opening paragraph does much to confirm: "The first half of the eighteenth century in England did not produce any remarkably great architect. It is true that Wren did not die until 1723 and that Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh were still alive. But they were survivals from a previous age and their connections were with the seventeenth rather than the eighteenth century." Allowing for the comparative truth of the first sentence, for admittedly "remarkably great architects" do not appear punctually every twenty-five years, it is only by comparison with Wren that Gibbs can be denied the prefix "great," and Kent was undoubtedly a better architect than Adam as the proximity of the Horse Guards to the Admiralty so clearly demonstrates. Mr. Dale may, if he likes, consider Vanbrugh a survival from the previous century, but as Blenheim was not begun until 1705, and took many years to complete, King's Weston not until 1710, Duncombe not until 1713, Seaton Delaval not until 1718 and Grimsthorpe not until 1723, it is a view which may perhaps be considered to stand in need of some further elucidation.

Moreover no attempt is made to investigate Wyatt's relationship with the Greek Revival, whose works the author considers "grim," and so one must regretfully express the opinion that while Mr. Dale has earned our gratitude by his investigations into the activities of Wyatt the restorer, he has only partially discharged his obligations as the biographer of Wyatt the architect.

Two New Periodicals

TELEHOR : bi-monthly international review of new vision ; first number, October-November, 1936. Brno, Czechoslovakia : fr. Kalivoda. Price, 24s. annually.
TYPOGRAPHY : quarterly, edited by Robert Harling ; first number, November, 1936. London : the Shenval Press. Price, 2s. (7s. 6d. annually).

A NEW periodical dealing with the visual arts as a complex of cultural manifestations, instead of as a number of unrelated spheres of artistic performance, could not begin its life more aptly than with a special number on the work and philosophy of Moholy-Nagy. Moholy-Nagy is not only a distinguished practitioner of the arts of painting, construction, photography, typography, theatre design, industrial design and the cinema (and a famous and successful teacher), but he is a philosopher, at the same time, who has a very clear conception of the position of art as a reality in life. He has understood, and the writings by him in this first number of *Telehor* clearly explain his point of view, the essential fluidity of the various art media, which by writers on art and practitioners of the arts are too often assumed to be capable of convenient and permanent separation into rigid compartments. Moholy-Nagy sees art as a whole and is quite prepared to see, for example, painting (that is, easel-painting) and studio sculpture becoming obsolescent as art forms, giving way to new forms and media, utilizing contemporary techniques and activities. The new medium he himself is most interested in is that of light, as one might expect from his own experiments, photographic, mechanical and otherwise, in the æsthetic utilization of light.

The issue contains an Introduction by Siegfried Giedion, and several short articles by Moholy-Nagy himself on various aspects of contemporary visual art, notably on photography and the film, and an interesting indication of the way his own new vision is formulating in an article entitled "From Pigment to Light." The text is repeated in German, French, English and Czech. The numerous reproductions of Moholy-Nagy's works (some in colour) are well reproduced and beautifully laid out on the pages, the latter achieving some of the quality of exact and inevitable spatial relationship that is characteristic of his own paintings. The only complaint to be made is that the text is printed in a light sans-serif type that (as with most sans-serif types) is, set solid, particularly difficult to read; a fault that is aggravated by the great width of line (six and a half inches). What is worse, the typographer has indulged in that pseudo-modern affectation of doing without any capital letters. The rectangular panels of type make, as a result, a beautiful even grey mass on the page, conforming well with the simple pure character of the paintings reproduced alongside, but it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the text is illegible. It may appear disproportionate so to emphasize a fault of format in a magazine whose contents are of such vitality, but the modern movement, in the establishment of which Moholy-Nagy has played an important part, gets much of its authority from being inspired by reason rather than effect, and it appears uncomplimentary to Moholy-Nagy's achievements that his ideas should be presented in so irrational a typographical form. An exhibition of Moholy-Nagy's work, by the way, is taking place this month at the London Gallery.

If we can expect to be allowed to treat an art periodical as itself a work of art, still more can we expect the same from a typographical paper. It must practice quite irreproachably what it preaches, and one can say at once that the first issue of *Typography*, presented in a cover of particular charm and distinction, maintains throughout the pages a standard of type-setting and design of the highest class; and one that is not afraid to be in the best sense modern—that is to say to maintain a modern experimental spirit that is original in a constructive sense, not merely mannered.

The contents cover a wide ground and the format displays pleasing and sensitive variations of paper and colour. The articles include one by James Shand entitled "The Alphabet and the Printing Press" and one by S. L. Righyni entitled "News into Type," the latter effectively illustrated by inset specimens from English and American daily newspapers reproduced from the original matrices.

Of this periodical I have two mild complaints : first, is it good printing practice to have such a much wider than necessary space between the vertical columns of type?; secondly, the editorial notes, the captions and so on have a faint but worrying facetious or whimsical air that consorts badly with the dignity of the subject. The distinguished, even ascetic, format is a most unsuitable vehicle for the "more anon," "and now Mr. Blank will tell you" style of writing. And why caption an illustration "two children's books all the way from France"? (why not simply "from France"?).

One more constructive suggestion : in a magazine dealing largely with type founts, would it not be of interest to print, perhaps in an appendix at the end, a note of the names and styles of all the types used, for text and for titles?

J. M. RICHARDS

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OVERLEAF : *AT CLOSE RANGE*

Exhibition and display architecture is the sphere in which modern Italian architects have shown most assurance and made the most interesting contribution to contemporary examples. The exhibition pavilion, for the National Insurance Institute, of which this is an interior detail (Franco Albini, architect), forms part of the *Fiera Campionaria* at Milan. It consists of a single large hall, with its glazed and painted walls designed as display surfaces for lettering, posters, etc. An article by Maria Albini, on recent modern architecture in Italy, begins on page 15 of this issue.

DECORATION

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

JANUARY 1937

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HOUSE IN AVENUE ROAD, ST. JOHN'S WOOD: FURNITURE AND DECORATION: R. W. SYMONDS, ARCHITECT

BULLETIN OF STANDARD DESIGNS

COLOUR: THE ENGLISH TRADITION, BY OZENFANT

The play-room belonging to the house in Avenue Road, looking across the garden to the house itself. The furniture is in limed oak. The upholstery is fawn and white and the curtains green and oyster. The rug was designed by Paul Nash.

ozenfant

The name of Amédée Ozenfant, the author of the article on colour printed overleaf, is one that has an important place in the history of modern art. Though before anything else a painter, and famous as such in France, his own country, he is known to the public in this country chiefly as a writer on æsthetics—not on æsthetics in the learned sense of academic æsthetic ideology but in the sense of art explained and appreciated, analysed in its impingement on the activities of life and their environment. His book, *Art*, published in 1928 and in an English translation, under the title *Foundations of Modern Art*, in 1931, is a very spirited study of art as a vital activity.

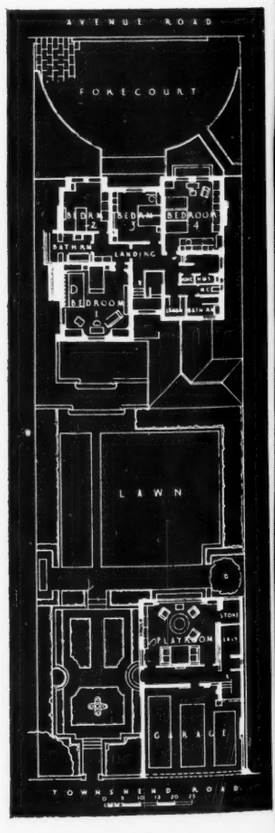
To the public that reads about art his popular interpretation of it is Ozenfant's contribution. To the painter and to the Art historian who likes to classify the evolution of art under convenient labels, Ozenfant is identified with Purism, the semi-abstract movement that had great influence in the years between 1918 and 1925, and that he led, together with the painter Jeanneret (that is, the architect le Corbusier). Ozenfant and le Corbusier jointly established the review *l'Esprit Nouveau* in 1920, and edited it until 1925. It was an organ of the greatest influence in the evolution of the modern schools of art in post-war Paris. Also in 1925 Ozenfant published his book *Peinture Moderne*.

As a painter his work has not been widely exhibited in this country. It is the paintings of his purist phase that are most known and respected. He has been the painter of a number of large-scale mural decorations in various situations in Continental buildings, the most famous of which probably is that which formed the end wall of the music room in the celebrated house near Berlin, built for his own occupation by Erich Mendelsohn. This, a formal composition in rich sombre colours, with the interesting architectural quality of variation of glazed and textured surfaces, was completed in 1930.

Ozenfant is also well-known as a teacher. He founded an Academy in Paris in 1932. In the early part of this year he moved his Academy to London, partaking of the quite general exodus from the Continent to stabler conditions here that our art, and particularly our architecture, is benefiting from today. The Ozenfant Academy now flourishes in Warwick Road, Kensington, and exemplifies a personal method of studio art-teaching, combining study with work in collaboration with the master—an alternative to the art-school method—which, though familiar in Paris, we have hitherto lacked here. J.M.R.

BULLET

A: Television cabinet. Designed by Misha Black. A combination television and normal wireless set, in walnut veneer. The large number of controls required necessitated their being shut away so that they will not conflict with the image. The speaker opening, also, had to be as unobtrusive as possible and the whole cabinet designed to concentrate attention on the screen. The controls are therefore arranged within doors that are closed as soon as the focus of the image has been properly adjusted. The doors are here seen open. Price, £100, approximately. Ekco, Ltd. B: Ceiling light fitting. A.F. 501. Designed by Ronald Froy. Cellulosed in two colours; glass lens bowl hinged for easy cleaning. 9 in. bowl size (overall diameter, 20 ins.), £5 10 0; 12 in. bowl size (overall diameter, 24 ins.), £7 10 0. W. & N. Froy, Ltd. C: Pendant light fitting. A.F. 550. Designed by Ronald Froy. Two-colour cellulose or cream and chromium plate. 12 in. size: £3 3 0 (cellulose), £4 2 6 (chromium plate). 15 in. size: £4 5 0 (cellulose), £5 0 0 (chromium plate). W. & N. Froy, Ltd.



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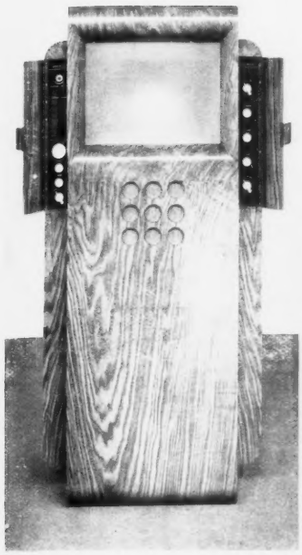

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HOUSE IN AVENUE ROAD. FURNITURE AND DECORATION BY R. W. SYMONDS

The redecorated portion of this house consists of the first floor of the house proper and a single-storey building at the end of the garden (see plan adjoining). Also alterations and new equipment to the kitchen wing and the formal lay-out of the garden. The single-storey building contains a garage, to which access is obtained direct from a secondary road, and a large play-room, 1, with french windows opening on to the garden (see also the photograph on page 37). The furniture, designed by the architect, is in limed oak, and the radiator grille in the corner in anodized metal.

HOUSE IN AVENUE ROAD

On the first floor the house contains four bedrooms and two bathrooms (see plan overleaf). 2 and 3, the daughter's bedroom, designed to accommodate two. The movable furniture, including writing-table, dressing-table and chair, is in burr ash veneer, and the large built-in wardrobe, seen in 2, in plywood painted. The easy chair is covered in warm brown satin and the curtains and bedspread are flowered chintz in white and pale green. In the owner's bedroom, 4, 5, 6 and 7, the furniture, all designed by the architect, is in white hide with mirror glass lavishly used for the dressing-table fitment, 4, and the surround to the electric fire, 7. The bed-head, on the right in 5, is upholstered in oyster satin. The carpet is fawn, with a lamb-skin rug. The curtains are oyster silk, quilted and stitched in pale blue. The upholstery to chairs and sofa and the bedspread are in the same oyster colour. The decoration on the mirror, the bedside panels, lamps and a clock were designed by Frank Dobson.

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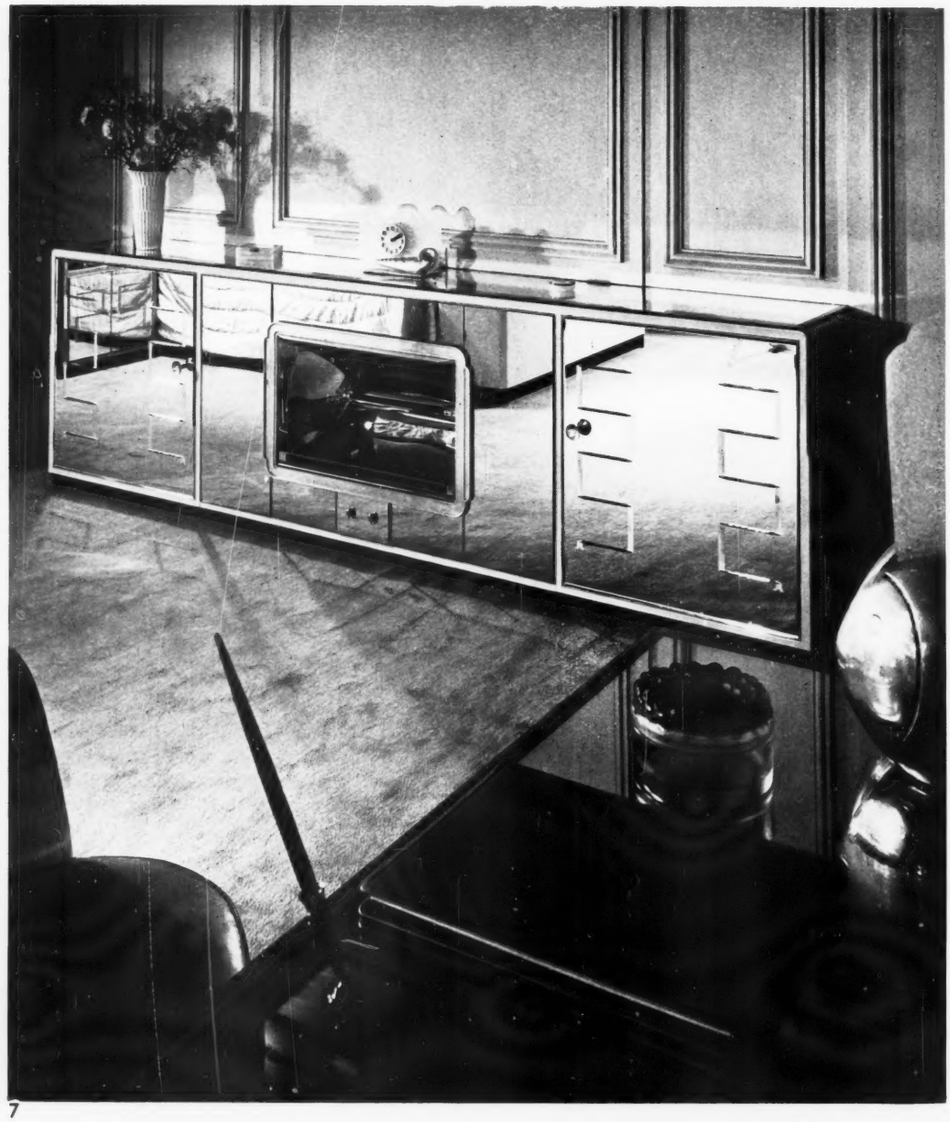

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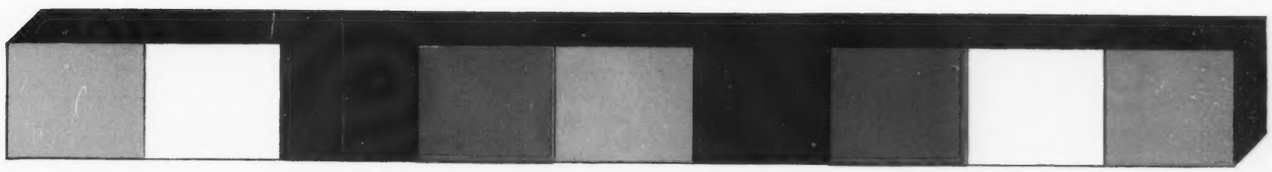


COLOUR

THE ENGLISH TRADITION

By Ozenfant

The Range of Gentle Colours

Miracles of English lighting; fairies glistening on the particles of air or water in the English countryside, or the sea and the Thames spreading their all-pervading humidity. Pearls of an English day; steel, bricks, and the most material docks, invested with the transparency, the reality, and almost the essence itself of the paradise of mythology. London produced Turner, the father of subtle colour in modern painting—all over the world, and in the works of the Impressionists of France, his pupils. It is, too, the home of the dreamy atmosphere of Whistler. Atmosphere, nothing but atmosphere.

"*Pas la couleur, rien que la nuance.*"

So said Verlaine, who owed to English poetry what that poetry owes to English skies—for natives of a country, without doubt, owe more to their geographic environment than to their blood.

It is true, that of all the countries I have visited, all over the world, London, with Venice is the place where the quality of light creates most often effects of subtle distinction.

Distinction is an English quality. England is certainly the country where it is the most valued of virtues. It is the country of the perfect gentleman—where a tie or a bow is not quite this, not quite that; but "just so," exactly what is needed to show appreciation of differences of occasion.

It is quite definitely the aristocratic distinctiveness of the English light which has been responsible for this wonderful range of broken tones; the half or quarter tones that I so admired on my first visit to London.

I spent a night near Eaton Square, and through open windows, one mild evening, I had a glimpse of wonderful rooms where pastel ladies and perfect males led an idyllic existence between walls not blue—but bluish; not red, but rose-coloured; not green, but greenish; their curtains not violet, but soft lilac; not white, but cream; not grey, but dove-colour.

Ah! the exquisite delicacies which inevitably bring to my mind the effects that that foremost discreet Briton, the sun, produces over London in the clouds and the mists. There is nothing to teach the English in matters of distinction, but everything to be learnt from them.

But I do not confuse this admirable tradition of distinguished colour, one of the virtues of this country, with the too frequent use of dirty tones; without taste or without restraint—those uncontrolled insipidities, nearly good and just as nearly bad, which too often ruin the walls of London. And I do not confuse, with these supreme refinements, the abominable caricatures of furniture, so-called "distinctive," in which every quality is false, that encumber the showrooms of the furniture shops, and which carry the extremest melancholy into people's houses.

(Distinctive colour, but not of a distinctive *nature*! These are not the same thing at all.)

The Range of Strong Colours

The gentle English range of colours is little known to the stranger; though it is quite well known in the costumiers' shops that the English choose soft colourings.

This quiet range of colours: one must come to England to discover it, to be acquainted with it well, to appreciate with justice all its taking seductiveness, to judge how much it is all bound up with the special character of the country, largely dictating this kind of taste. This is the intimate English colouring.

It is another range of English colours that is well known to the foreigner. It is so characteristic that the principal colours which dominate this range are called in France "couleurs anglais": "brun anglais," "rouge anglais," "verts anglais" (leaf-green, middle-green, blue-green); "vermillon anglais;" intense yellows. These are the robust colours which for centuries have made foreigners remark with reference to objects painted with them, "that is English." These are the colours which shop-fronts had to rely on before marbles and metals came to replace them. There is the strong "tobacco brown" that one found,

Vivid colours of strong value are generally "unliveable with," unless they are separated by white or grey. See range of colours above.

with the white and the famous green of fishing boats; there is the authentic old stout-bottle brown; and that of the doors of the aristocratic streets and magnificent squares of the Adam period; the red, blue and green; the dark brown of old timbers; the deep greens beloved of joiners, and of old wagons, and the "English" vermilion which signifies British, especially on labels of international produce. And the pure white which enframes windows so sparklingly, on façades of brick in a superb tone of black.

Alas, year after year, and more and more, is this tradition of strong colours disappearing. This tradition which serves on English houses as the stamp of Britain, and which the world over is significant of English strength, is tending to be replaced by other mediocre colours: neither delicate nor strong, and often detestable. The insipidity of ——'*s Lavender* struggles with the superb solidity of *Bass*, and the result is neither one thing nor the other: a mutual concession which, as with all concessions, ought not to be classed as art (while it is admitted that it might be worthy of other things, even diplomacy). One would say that the refined range of colours is trying to supersede the strong.

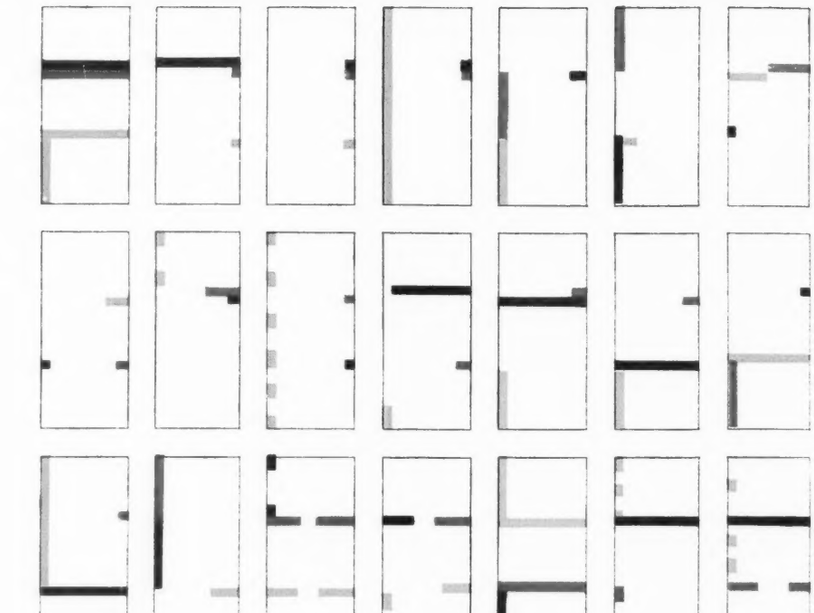
The great strength these noble and loyal colours could have given is all being wasted. For example, the doors of Bedford Square: strong blues give way to anæmic or acid blues; the deep reds become a pink that is saddening to the heart. Elsewhere, in the admirable Edwardes Square and its surroundings, ungrateful violet replaces British browns; virile greens are transformed into the green of a salad raised in a cellar. And the royal red, the vermilion-orange of the old omnibus, becomes a little gooseberry-coloured on the motor-bus; similarly the pillar boxes. And observe that, in spite of the fact that this old tradition expressed British strength, it had extreme distinction, even softness, in addition to its powerfulness.

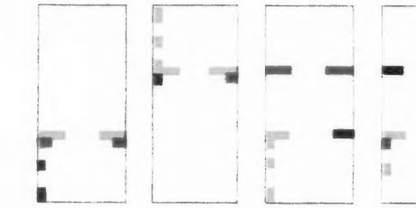
And now, it is important to be clear.

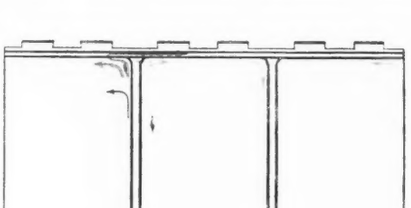
Dismiss the idea of preaching a perpetual imitation of the past, a timidity in face of the new. Long live the new as long as it will thrive, and long live tradition! But tradition which is enriched; which looks for something new within its range. Tradition must never be discarded—or only discarded to be carried forward.

But tradition must be well understood. And what is a great tradition? Something which contributes to the glory of a nation in the eyes of the foreigner. And how does it contribute to this glory? And when? Give credit to the national genius of a country (the genius of the people combined with the natural genius of the soil). It has produced discoveries of benefit to all humanity (Shakespeare, Newton, Purcell, Bacon, Darwin, Kelvin, Turner). And in a domain which seems very specialized, such as that of painting buildings or objects, the same principle applies.

This strong range of colours, was it not doubtless a man who devised it? But it is also the nation that chose it and adopted it, because it corresponded so faithfully with certain needs of strength and solidity; and







Drawings by R. Jensen

When M. Ozenfant came to live in London, one of his means of adapting himself to strange surroundings, climatic and atmospheric, was to decorate the living-room of his Kensington flat in accordance with his own theories of chromatic values in the interior. The room (which is illustrated here by permission of David Morris & Sons) is 36 ft. long and 18 ft. wide. It is designed so that the plan can be modified to meet the purpose to which it is to be put at any moment, by the manipulation of double curtains; also so that the effect of the colours on the occupants can be changed, in the following ways:

1, according to the psychological needs of the moment; the curtains form a kind of architectural palette;
2, according to the nature of the light—day (bright, sunny or dull) and night;
3, according to the season;
4, according to the social needs of the moment.

The ceilings are dead white (Ostwald a), as also the cornices. In effect the white of the ceiling becomes a grey. The doors are painted with a dead white enamel; similarly the windows. The walls facing the light or perpendicular to it are in eggshell oil paint, of a*

* The references are to the Ostwald Chart of colour identification, used on the Continent.

grey-brown colour (Ostwald, 2 e.c.). The walls against the light are matt white, thus providing a balance of surfaces.

The curtains to the windows are in white muslin, for the following reasons: In London, when it is not too bright, and curtains are unnecessary, they can be drawn back; when it is sunny, it is useful to be able to reduce the amount of light a little, and the diffusion of the sunlight through the muslin is very attractive; in the evening the fresh whiteness of the curtains is very gay and they reflect the light well.

The skirtings, radiators, window sills and mantelshelves are brown (Ostwald 6 p.l.). The floor is in light oak. The moveable curtains, running on double tracks are in the following colours: red (Ostwald 7 n.a.); green (Ostwald 22 p.e.); yellow (Ostwald 4 n.a.); brown (Ostwald 5 n.l.).

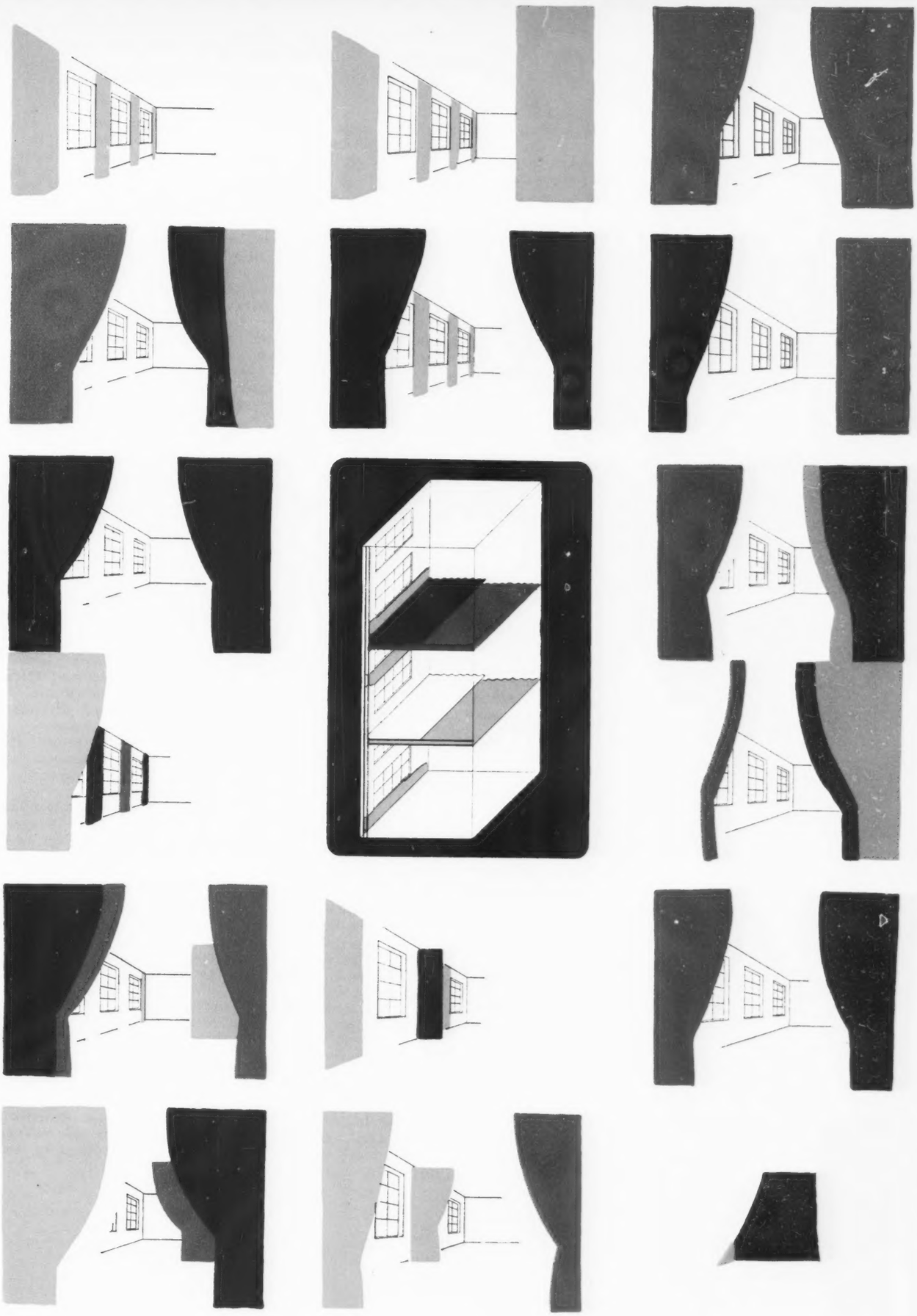
An innovation to be noticed is the rounding of the angles to the tracks, which allows the curtains to be moved to any position. The tracks are fixed to the ceiling and the curtains hang so that they just touch the floor, in order to eliminate draughts and for the sake of appearance.

There are six red curtains, two green, two yellow, and two brown. The curtains are very full: four times the length of the run.

Each curtain is lined with light silk, exemplifying the gentle English range of colours referred to in the article.

The colours, as shown in the illustrations, are intensified, because it is impossible to give the true colour effect of large areas of colour with minute areas of the same colour. The painter Gauguin said with some humour "a kilogram of green is more green than a hundred grammes of the same colour."

The colour theme of this room was based on—in the first place—a childhood memory of a cock crowing to the sun in front of a tumble-down whitewashed wall.



these are the dominant characteristics of the English character.

But those needs are not only English, they are to be found among other nations; probably they are universal. So well, however, did the English make their choice, of a range of colours expressing their own strength and solidity, that these colours still serve the whole world as a basis for the expression of the same ideas and sentiments. It is even more than a national tradition, it is a universal inheritance. I have seen in Athens, in Moscow, Seville, Paris, Amsterdam, and Cairo, porches, doors or boats painted with English colours, and they were magnificent. On ancient buildings or on modern, they have been equally effectively used—in antique Athens and in ancient Egypt. The same colours have been found in the ruins and excavations of every great civilization—even in China. I would not hesitate to say they have the quality of eternity.

In the adoption of this strong range of colours, the unknown authors of English folk-lore had a deft eye and hand. They rediscovered an eternal truth. But there is one truth which is in danger of being forgotten today, through negligence, and through belief in the ease of repetition of something one knows (where, in fact, the repetition becomes less and less accurate)—through negligence this beautiful tradition is being changed in England, and perforce being turned into something mediocre, having lost its force of logic. In brief, however passionate an innovator I may be, I am convinced that all English, or any other architecture, with so much more indebtedness to the past than to the entirely modern, would gain enormously by re-establishing contact with the old English colour; for here is something everlasting.

This range of English colours, if applied to objects does not destroy the form, for the reason that they are truly architectural colours.

There are, of course, other possible constructive colours than these, and we will see further on how to arrive at them; but in the present-day uncertainty in which architects find themselves, when faced with a colour problem, much progress will already have been made if we concentrate for the moment on the old beautiful strong colours, and if we eliminate certain bad " modern " shades—such as certain violets!

Attention à la couleur

The experiences of the *scientist* Charles Henry have shown that colour sensation precedes that of form. The form is always seen by means of the colour, since bodies always have colour. Or, if you wish, forms are always seen by light which is emitted or reflected by the object. But light (except that which emanates directly from a light source to the eye) is always " coloured " by the forms it shows. (We will study the physical phenomena of colour later.) It is, therefore, a pure abstraction, when one refers to form without thinking of colour simultaneously.

So colour is an essential element of architecture. Unfortunately most architects only think of colour at the time the building is being erected—a little like a god creating a beautiful woman and saying to himself, let us make her first without any colour, and afterwards we will paint her face. That is why, too often, even in modern buildings, colour does not form a part of the architecture. It is a disguise, more or less successful. Very rarely is it truly organic. That is to say, giving the impression of being an integral part of the architecture.

Colour always *modifies* the form to some extent: if you were to amuse yourself painting the Pyramids in that ridiculous violet of the door which offends me so much each morning as I go to my Academy, they would no longer be the Pyramids. It was this kind of destructive use of colour that was perpetrated recently in a building I know by an excellent architect: a hall in his building was very well proportioned while it was still in the white of the bare plaster; it became false in proportion as soon as it was painted—in a violet-blue. We will see later how to distinguish between constructive and destructive shades and how to use them rationally. But it can be said straight off, that certain forms do not permit the use, architecturally, of certain colours, if these forms are good in principle. For instance, a curved shape, forming part of a cylinder, maybe, or a sphere, does not allow of the use of certain blues, which *recede*. Which means they *deform*. (These colours ought only to be used as correctives to bad shapes.)

It is a matter of fact that with modern architecture it is very seldom that the colour solutions are worthy of the forms, and for the following reasons:—

First, from the lack of education in colour of the architect. In schools of architecture there is practically no attention given to colour problems; so little as to merit no mention. The art of colour, which demands of the picture-painter a long training, is almost totally neglected by architects. More often—when any study is made at all—the architect colours his plans or projects with water-colours or crayons, and these fantastic and abstract colours have usually no relation to those put on the walls.

Secondly, it also happens that in the diabolic business of being an architect, in the confusion of art, technique, finance, difficulties of carrying out the work—which bring delays and continuous searches for solutions to sudden crises—it is thought " the painting can wait." It ought to be thought out and decided exactly and rigorously at the same moment as the creation of the *first idea*. It ought to be thought of and decided absolutely in accordance with the form.

From the first idea. A mother thinks she would like a fair boy with blue eyes. In this way an architect often thinks of his building as an abstract child, but jelly-like, to be dyed when it is born . . . .

He dreams vaguely of the colour and waits until the fatal moment when the building is up, and it is absolutely essential for him to get down to the colour. Exactly like a workman who should weave his carpet in white instead of in coloured wools, and finally paint it with coloured dyes. It is essential to appreciate the difference . . . .

Thirdly, the architect receives in the schools a serious and methodical course on the art of planning, materials, strength calculations. All these studies on which his art depends are the subjects of methods, laws, tables. But colour is left entirely to the architect's sensibility. It is all completely empiric. It is all haphazard. Also the architect is usually a victim of painting contractors, whose art consists in not arguing with the architect, and who are generally dealers in colours rather than artists in colour—or architects.

For it is obvious that the " colour counsellor " in architecture, which should be the painting contractor, makes it necessary for him to understand architecture properly, which is seldom the case.

The decorator? He usually wants to carry out some personal work, to the great detriment of the architecture, which he usually sacrifices to his colour.

This is what happens: the unhappy architect, at the fatal moment for " finishing " his building, arrives on the site with his client. The client is full of a jumble of ideas, of memories, of sensations experienced in houses of all periods, of a collection of ideas for colours derived from drawing-rooms, dining-rooms, bedrooms, and boudoirs seen and admired during the course of his life.

The painting contractor himself arrives, bearing a tiny colour book, with samples of colour as large as a lady's finger-nail. And it is on these miniature " tests " that the client, his wife, the architect, and the painter have to come to some agreement!

We must endeavour to introduce a little order into this business, or at least sense into a great deal of it. But what is sense without order? We must try to find some method of arriving at some sort of order—one that will at least enable us to escape from this vagueness in the design of colour.

ANTHOLOGY

Co-operation, 1851

I conceive it to be the duty of every educated person closely to watch and study the time in which he lives, and, as far as in him lies, to add his humble mite of individual exertion, to further the accomplishment of what he believes Providence to have ordained.

Nobody, however, who has paid any attention to the particular features of our present era, will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end—to which indeed all history points—the realization of the unity of mankind: not a unity which breaks down the limits and levels the peculiar characteristics of the different nations of the earth, but rather a unity, the results and product of those very national varieties and antagonistic qualities.

The distances which separated the different nations and parts of the globe, are gradually vanishing before the achievements of modern invention, and we can traverse them with incredible speed; the languages of all nations are known, and their acquirement placed within the reach of everybody; thought is communicated with the rapidity, and even by the power of lightning. On the other hand, the great principle of the division of labour, which may be called the moving power of civilization, is being extended to all branches of science, industry, and art. Whilst formerly the greatest mental energies strove at universal knowledge, and that knowledge was confined to few, now they are directed to specialities, and in these again even to the minutest points. Moreover, the knowledge now acquired becomes at once the property of the community at large: whilst, formerly, discovery was wrapt in secrecy, it results from the publicity of the present day, that no sooner is a discovery or invention made, than it is already improved upon and surpassed by competing efforts. The products of all quarters of the globe are placed at our disposal, and we have only to choose which is the best and cheapest for our purposes, and the powers of production are entrusted to the stimulus of competition and capital.

Thus man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs his creation, and, by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer nature to his use—himself a divine instrument. Science discovers these laws of power, motion, and transformation; industry applies them to the raw matter which the earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge; art teaches us the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry, and gives to our productions forms in accordance with them. The Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new starting-point, from which all nations will be able to direct their future exertions. I confidently hope that the first impression which the view of this vast collection will produce on the spectator, will be that of deep thankfulness to the Almighty, for the blessings which he has bestowed upon us already here below; and the second, the conviction that they can only be realized in proportion to the help which we are prepared to render to each other; therefore, only by peace, love, and ready assistance, not only between individuals, but between the nations of the earth. This being my conviction, I must be highly gratified to see here assembled the magistrates of all important towns of this realm, sinking all their local, and possibly political differences—the representatives of the different political opinions of this country, and the representatives of the different foreign nations—today representing only one interest.

PRINCE ALBERT

[From his speech at the banquet given by the Lord Mayor of London in honour of the projected Great Exhibition of 1851]

MARGINALIA

The Crystal Palace

Below we publish a representative selection of Press comments on the recent conflagration at Sydenham.

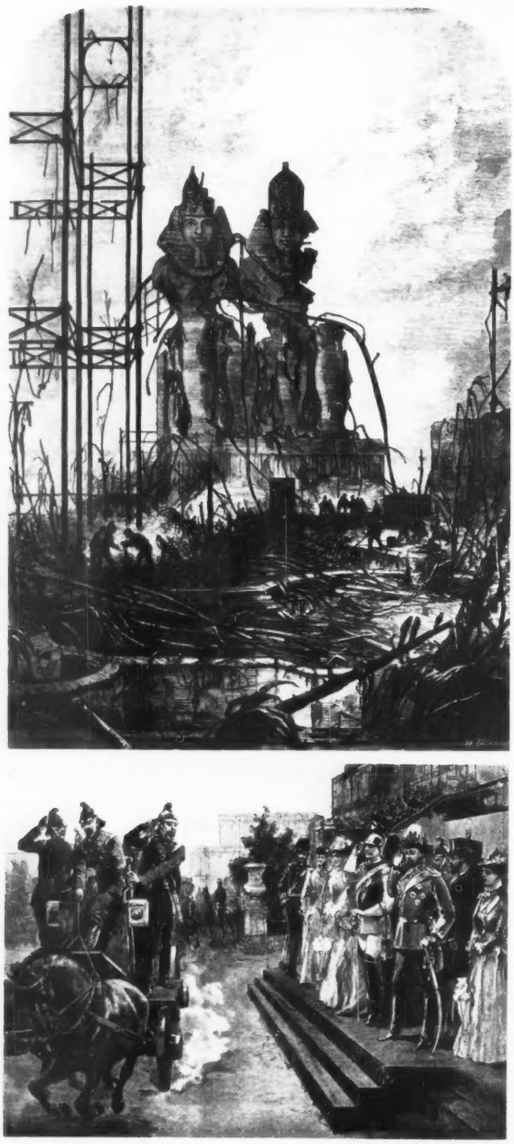
While few of the English papers seem to have realized the full significance of that masterpiece of pre-fabrication, it has not been overlooked by at least one writer in the Continental Press.

The English comments vary from the lyrical youth-at-the-helm style of the *Daily Express* to the funereal sic-transit note of the *Morning Post*. The *Star*, with a happy optimism, considers that it would be impossible to build a worse building—a fact the incorrectness of which many of our more celebrated architects could demonstrate at a moment's notice if given the chance. The *Manchester Guardian* adopts a bless-the-dear-boys tone, and refers to a mythical architect named Pemberton. *The New Statesman* on the other hand is as enlightened as ever—if disregardful of fact: while hymning the merits of the departed as the first masterpiece in steel and glass, it overlooks the fact that in 1851 steel for building was still undiscovered. *The Times*, always conscious of its national duty not to leave the obvious unexpressed, points out that it was "becoming steadily more historical" every year. However, the highest level of fatuity is attained by the *Daily Sketch*, who would like its place to be taken by a National War Memorial. Well, they'd better be quick!

"*The material loss in the Crystal Palace disaster must be very heavy: but that is not the worst of the damage, which must be reckoned to be the extinction of a national monument. The Palace may have outlived the glories and the uses of its prime; but it was in its way unique, and irreplaceable.*"

MORNING POST.

"*Succeeding generations will not really be in any way the poorer because they will never see the Crystal Palace. But there is a certain tragedy in the final disappearance of anything. Though it be nothing more,*



Contemporary engravings of two occasions in the career of the Crystal Palace relevant to the manner of its recent destruction: top, the ruins of the north transept destroyed by fire, 1867; bottom, the German Emperor's visit in 1891: review of the Fire Brigade.

it is at least a sharp break in the link which binds us with an age whose memorials are thus perishing with it."

NEWS-CHRONICLE.

"Londoners will not soon forget the great wave of emotion which swept over them at the tragic way in which the Crystal Palace, symbol of a great past and the scene of much homely happiness disappeared. But now that the embers are cooling, they can look at the matter in a less partial way.

In the cold light of the morning after we can console ourselves with the fact that the Palace was badly adapted for most modern purposes. It was difficult to heat in winter, impossible to cool in summer, oddly shaped, too large for many of the enterprises it sheltered. It would be almost impossible not to build a better building. Certainly the opportunity is there, if it is decided to build. The Palace held its place in London's affections because it stood foursquare as a symbol of its own time. We have the chance to build something which will embody the spirit of our time, and—we hope—be as much regretted when its time comes to an end."

THE STAR.

"But the Crystal Palace has not died before staging a 'come back,' denied to all other Victorian beauties. Mr. Mendelsohn, the eminent modernist architect, found in the Crystal Palace the finest expression of English modernism, produced some seventy years before the worship of iron and glass and structural probity had descended upon the rest of the world, and modernist architects, home and foreign, had sung the praise of the glasshouse that Albert built.

"In recent years our most breathless modernists, with scornful glances at Lutyens and Lanchester and Wornum and even Pemberton, had rushed their visitors off to Sydenham to behold the cubic grandeurs of Paxton's palace."

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

"As a structure, now admired, now derided, it had outgrown all serious objections to it.

"There it stood, becoming steadily more historical and symbolic as the years passed, and as living memories faded of its original purpose and pristine splendour when Paxton first put it up in Hyde Park as an unparalleled way of housing an unparalleled enterprise—the Great Exhibition of 1851."

THE TIMES.

"The destruction of the Crystal Palace obliges showmen and competitors of all sorts (ranging from brass bands to Persian cats and cage birds) to discover a fresh assembling place.

"That the Crystal Palace will be rebuilt is unlikely. It was the expression of an age, an essentially mid-Victorian curiosity—some might say freak—and whatever happens to the 200 acres now left bare and blackened, it is safe to believe that the strange monster mansion of glass will not re-arise."

DAILY MAIL.

"My suggestion would be a vast People's Palace, with gardens, restaurants, a national cinema theatre and concert room, and everything handsome, on the south bank of the Thames. This bank wants redeeming, and if further encouragement than the destruction of the Crystal Palace is needed we may find it in the strange reflection that, except the Cenotaph in Whitehall, there is no national memorial of the war. Why should we not have a cheerful as well as a sad memorial?"

DAILY SKETCH.

"Where Crystal Palace stood we will raise something better, more beautiful, more enduring."

DAILY EXPRESS.

"In the course of the 19th century, man learnt to build far more boldly, but no single building achieved the architectural balance of the Crystal Palace. With it there perishes the truest architectural memorial of that age of impermanence. Its only rival, the magnificent Palais des Machines of the Paris Exhibition of 1889, was broken up in 1905, in order to leave free a very mediocre building dating from the late 18th century. As sole witness of the epoch

AN ARCHITECTURAL TOUR IN TOYLAND

CHRISTMAS 1936

On leaving the Railway Station (*1895*) the traveller proceeds down the **AVENUE BEATRIX POTTER.** A sharp turn to the right leads him into **MABEL LUCIE ATTWELL STRASSE,** an imposing thoroughfare lined by private modern residences standing in spacious gardens. Another turn to the right, past the charming **Municipal Gardens** brings the traveller into the great **A. A. MILNE PLATZ.** In the centre stands a statue of the great writer; on the north one perceives the majestic **Town Hall,** erected soon after the War; on the east the **County Jail,** dating from the mid-nineteenth century and occupying the site of the old **Norman Keep.** (*Open to the public from* 10–6. *Entrance fee* 6*d. The key at the custodians' cottage.*) On the south side, the **Pooh Arms.***** *Running water in bedrooms; en pension terms from* 10/6 *per day*). On the west a magnificent new block of luxury flats, **Tinker Bell Court.** Leaving the Square by the **RUE SHIRLEY TEMPLE** one passes on the left a charming row of municipal cottages, and then finds oneself in a high-class residential district of old Elizabethan Manor Houses, whence the visitor is recommended to take a kiddy-kar back to the station.

of developing Industrialism, there now remains only the Eiffel Tower, of 1889."

SIEGFRIED GIEDION in the NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG.

MODERNISTICS. PLEASE NOTE!

"*The notion that modernism is fat and heavy and clumsy, the notion that a modern design must be dazzling and over-emphatic and strident—all that really dates back to a few designers in the early nineteen-twenties, people like Erich Mendelsohn, in his Einstein Tower stage, who had been influenced by Expressionism. As a matter of fact, the best modern buildings I have seen—certain schools in Hamburg*

Part of the colonnaded street of Jerash. From "Caravan Cities" by M. Rostortzeff. (Oxford University Press.) See the Rev. W. Drury's letter on this page.

and Hilversum particularly—are extremely quiet and self-obliterating. They have a way of saying "You first" instead of interposing their masses and planes between the user of the building and the spectators."

LEWIS MUMFORD
in the "New Yorker"

Exciting Moments in History Department

Of the old bridge at Rochester: "Its career was closed by the passage over it of Queen Victoria, in the autumn of 1856, *on her way to visit the wounded soldiers from the Crimea.*"

From a new book, *The Face of the Home Counties*, by H. Clunn.

CORRESPONDENCE

Linear Planning and Greek Cities

The Editor,
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,—The article by Mr. Trystan Edwards in your issue for November draws attention to the urgent problems of urban planning with which contemporary designers are faced.

A study of the excavated sites of the age which followed the conquests of Alexander (died 323 B.C.) shows that the founders of these cities knew well the form of civic design which corresponded with their political ideal. The fundamental principle was the use of a straight axis which was the main street of the city and was called the "place" (platea). The axial streets at Alexandria and at Antioch were each several miles long. At Jerash, which is quoted as a mature town plan by the authorities, the main axes was in a sense the only street, for since possibly the slowness with which transport moved or the necessity of enclosure for the purpose of defence made it undesirable to extend the main axis, resort was had to two minor axes at right angles to it, but these were placed at wide intervals and had no communication except with the main street, of which they were therefore parts, the junctions being marked by arches.

Also at Jerash a change in the architectural style of the colonnades from Ionic to Corinthian as the street is traversed suggests the possibility of a gradual progress of the busy part of the city in course of time along its axis with an avoidance of the necessity which is experienced in towns of other types for demolitions in order to make room for improvements. There are also indications here, in the form of paving, that the processional way, as the main street was sometimes called, leading to a temple or a market within the city, extended indefinitely in the other direction into the country controlled by the city-state.

The league of ten cities called the Decapolis, in Syria on the border of Galilee, of which Jerash (Gerasa) is one, were all of this character, and the principle is reflected in the Holy City seen by the author of *The Revelation*, for he twice refers to the "street" of it (in the singular). Indeed Jerusalem itself, whose "peace" corresponded with the ideal of the city-state, was "built as a city that is at unity in itself" according to the psalmist, and, as we learn from quite another source, had its colonnaded axial street.

If it cannot be said that in all these cases the great problem of combining growth with unity in the life of a city was solved, yet it is certain that the physical conditions for its solution, namely, equality of situation for all the inhabitants and openness of approach to all the parts, cannot be obtained except on the Greek plan.

Such cities were not to be found in Achaia, the early home of the Greeks, for there the land question was the main feature of the epoch, and that would be fatal to the extension of any city in a direction which could be foreseen by speculators. Accordingly the "chessboard" pattern of intersecting back streets existed here and is to be traced to the influence of Hippodamus of Miletus, and his plan can only be justified by his view that the population of the ideal city must be limited to ten thousand people, for a larger population would, on any other plan than the linear, be liable to congestion. In some cases which have been described as "chessboard" cities, such as Priene, which is of uncertain date, this plan is nevertheless only the filling in of an axial design which can be distinguished by the colonnades and the graduated widths of the streets. Farther east, in the regions opened to Greek culture by Alexander, the absence of any land problem has puzzled historians, and these countries were full of linear cities.

It is significant that there is no Latin word for "city" regarded as the abode of citizens (cives). Civitas means only the state. The Roman town was called urbs. It was built at the crossing of two roads and this plan may have been due to the military necessity of settling veteran soldiers to cultivate the land, for urbs has been connected with arare, to plough. When that purpose has been served, however, this turns out to be the very worst plan possible for avoiding congestion if a city grows upon the site, and it is generally believed that it was because of some form of city-congestion that the Roman empire came to an end.

To return to Greek cities, Jerash has been grouped with Palmyra, Dura, and Petra (all of them axial) in a study of "caravan" cities whose existence was due to inland trade and whose fitness for dealing with the lengthy trains of camels which came to them over the desert remains evident to us in the lay-out of their streets and forums. The cycle of history is now completed and again today, not only the policy of the city-state if we adopt it, but also the streamlines of modern transport, demand a return to this simple town-plan.

Your obedient servant,
W. DRURY.

Binstead,
Arundel, Sussex.

Fuel for Cooking

The Editor,
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,—We do not want to worry you unnecessarily, and I can well imagine that the perennial gas-electric controversy presents you with a number of ticklish minor problems.

At the same time, it appears to us that the reference on page 322 of the December issue of the REVIEW to the comparative merits of gas and electric cookers goes altogether too far in the direction of personal bias. This notion of coal-gas-electricity as three stages on the path of progress belongs in the realm of politics or social mysticism and not that of fact. It is borne out neither by laboratory analysis, practical tests, nor the general verdict of experience.

The paragraph in question lists two or three of the differential advantages of the electric cooker. It fails to point out that the gas cooker is (*a*) cheaper, (*b*) quicker, (*c*) much easier to work with, especially for people of only average competence and training, because of the exact control of the flame, and (*d*) more reliable—in the sense of being always, and quite certainly, on the job.

Whether these advantages counterbalance in your correspondent's mind the points which he mentions is a matter for him to decide; but we feel that it is hardly reasonable for him to put forward with all the airs of objectivity the statement of a preference, the merits of which are—to put it no higher—extremely debatable.

Your obedient servant,
S. C. LESLIE.
Publicity Manager, The Gas Light and Coke Company.

Opinions expressed in articles are, of course, the author's, not this Journal's. But we are glad to give our correspondent an opportunity of stating the other side of the case.—Ed. A.R.

The Modern English House

The Editor,
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,—With reference to your special housing number of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, we the undersigned would be glad to know how you reconcile your specific display of a house costing 2*s.* 2*d.* per cubic foot, described as representative of "Typical Brick Construction," with your statement in the introductory article ". . . most important, economy. There is rarely enough money to allow the architect to waste the smallest amount of space or material . . ."

Your obedient servants,
CECIL C. HANDISYDE.
R. FURNEAUX JORDAN.
A. DOUGLAS-JONES.
ERIC JARRETT.
O. PRYCE LEWIS.
THOMAS RITCHIE.
GEORGE FAIRWEATHER.
L. W. THORNTON-WHITE.
W. H. MCNICOL.
C. S. WHITE.

The "operative" word in our correspondents' letter is of course, "rarely." But when a client has *the means to commission a house in which the cost is not the most important factor, then it hardly appears that the architect has any other duty than to carry out the client's requirements.—Ed. A.R.*

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Trade News and Reviews

By BRIAN GRANT

Design for Commerce

In the House of Commons early in December the second reading of the "Offices Regulations Bill" was moved and rejected by 169 to 114 votes.

Those responsible for the introduction of the Bill are of opinion that the Public Health Act is insufficient and they wish, by the new Bill, to impose a definite standardization of conditions in offices which would be compulsorily enforced by local authorities.

• • •

One M.P. said that in the United States employers were so careful of the health of their staffs that they had gymnasia attached to their offices where the staffs did their "daily dozen." Another declared that he thought that it was grotesque and ironical to see magnificent blocks of offices going up while the provision made for the people working in them was so lacking. A third described the plight of a certain lady clerk who complained to him that she was provided with no accommodation for her coat, hat, shoes or stockings and that she had to place these under a cupboard, where they were nibbled by rats.

• • •

I spend a great deal of my time in and out of other people's offices and consider myself a fairly competent judge as to the conditions that prevail generally —though I must confess that I have not yet made the acquaintance of the stockingless typist.

• • •

Highly efficient-looking office interiors are certainly few and far between. In a great many of the older buildings the conditions prevailing can only be described as antediluvian and one is not surprised to find that the old "steel press" still does duty for the copying of letters and that all correspondence starts with the prehistoric "yours of the 5th inst. duly to hand" and terminates by assuring you of "their best attention at all times"—it being difficult to reconcile the latter lofty ideal with the shoddy, ill-lighted and chaotically-distributed apartment in which the giving of that "best attention" will have to be performed.

• • •

Though one may not like Corbusier's description of the home as "a machine for living in," the modern office should assuredly be a well-lighted, well-ventilated, well-equipped and efficiently-planned "machine for working in."

• • •

For the sake of the profit you hope to make, do give Miss Jones somewhere to put her stockings.

• • •

In all seriousness, however, I do protest that the average office is not merely badly planned but is completely unplanned. This is a sweeping statement, but it is made with sublime confidence and with the comforting (or should I say discomforting) knowledge that not one person out of one hundred who may chance to read these notes will be able to claim that his or her office (or the office in which he or she performs his or her daily task) is A.1 for plan, for lighting and for acoustics.

• • •

The plan of the modern office and the distribution of its equipment should receive all the care and consideration that is given to the arrangement of the highly organized hotel kitchen. The proper time to determine the correct disposition of the various services available and necessary is in the initial stages of planning; not, as is too often the case, after the architect and builder step out for the tenant to step in. The telephone can scarcely be regarded as a novelty and yet in many offices of quite recent vintage one still finds ensnaring wires crawling snake-like across the floor connecting up the instruments, for all the world as though they had been installed as very bright and intelligent "afterthoughts."

• • •

The requirements of artificial lighting in offices are the general ones of good diffusion and absence of shadows and glare.

Clean, simple, non-dust-collecting fittings are the obvious choice, or alternatively direct well diffused light from flush glazed ceiling panels. There are also many well designed indirect-lighting fittings available. The following table

The book-keeping department of a bankers' office at No. 10 Old Jewry, London. The arrangement is well designed as well as the individual furniture. Architect: F. Malcolm Burr. Designer: R. D. Russell. Metal chairs by Pel Ltd.

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Private Offices	8	6–12
Typing and Book-keeping Rooms	10	8–12
Filing Room	8	4–10
Stairways and Corridors ...	3	2–4
Waiting Room	5	4–6

• • •

The light-reflecting values of the walls, ceilings, floors and office furniture have also to be taken into consideration and it is surprising, therefore, that two colours giving an exceedingly low percentage of light reflection (namely, cocoanut brown and olive green) have been adopted as more or less standard colours for furniture and filing cabinets. The colour and surface texture of walls, ceilings and floors are an important consideration—the materials and finishes selected will affect (*a*) the percentage of light reflection given, (*b*) sound insulation, (*c*) thermal insulation.

• • •

The floor covering selected for the modern office should be soft and silent to walk upon. Rubber and cork are two materials to be commended; more particularly rubber, as it is obtainable in colours which have greater light-reflection values.

• • •

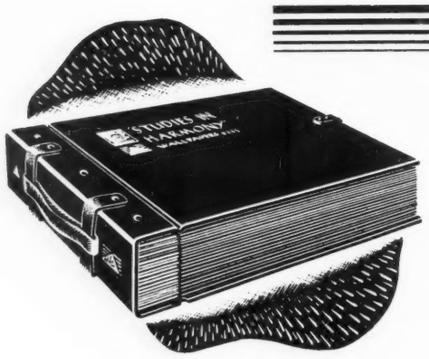
Partitions of a temporary nature often have to be used for the sub-division of large offices in order to provide flexibility for the accommodation of changing tenancies and many types of movable partitions, mostly in wood or metal, are available.

• • •

Of comparatively recent introduction to this country is the "Gypstele" system of unit construction, which combines the use of "Gyproc" fire-resisting wallboard with a series of patented metal sections

Shadowless lighting in a London Counting House. The room is dependent almost entirely on artificial light, there being only one window. To each laylight, measuring 20 ft. by 2 ft. 6 ins. there are only four lamps of 200 watts. Architects: Messrs. Yates, Cook & Darbyshire. Lighting Engineers: G. V. D. Illuminators, Ltd.

LINES FOR WALLPAPER



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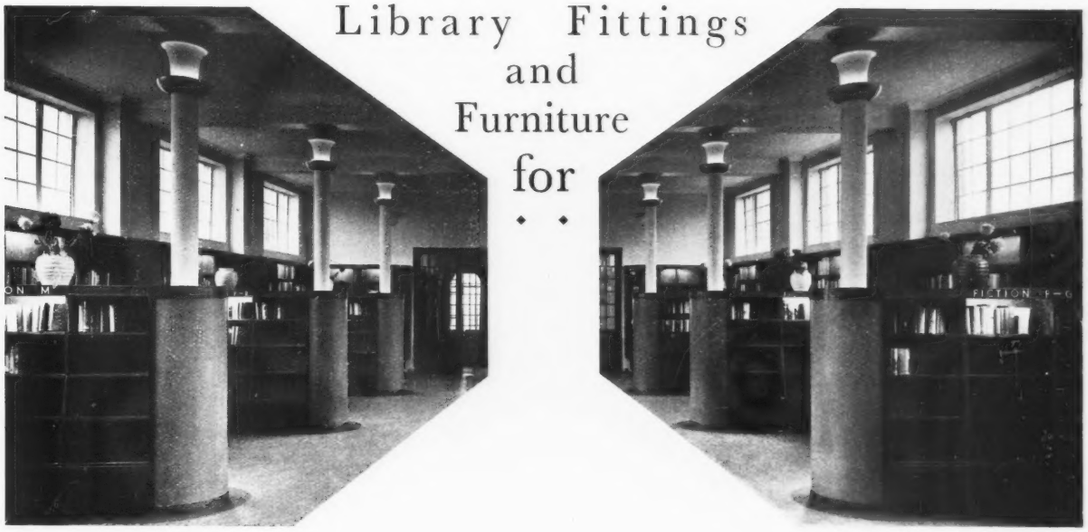

The illustrations are of The Branch Library at Finchley for the Boro' Engineer and Surveyor, Mr. Percival T. Harrison, M.Inst.C.E. We carried out the whole of the Wall and Island Bookcases and Showcases and the very fine Issue-Counter, illustrated below, which was made in Australian Walnut with the interior in African Walnut. The kicking strip round the base is in Ruboleum.

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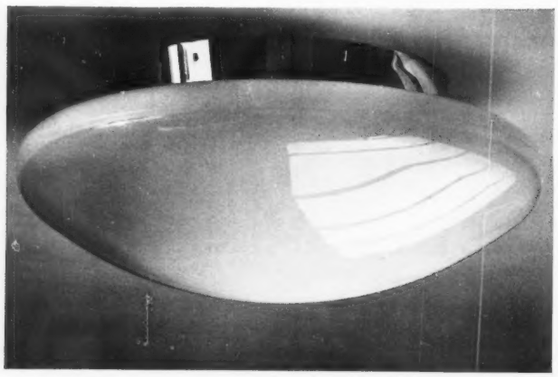
● ● ●

Office equipment of a general nature, inter-departmental telephone systems and ingenious drudgery-saving devices have reached an amazingly high standard of efficiency. The modern office should indeed be a well-equipped and efficiently-planned "machine for working in."

● ● ●



An "Ultralux" ceiling fitting in chromium and flashed opal glass 1 foot 2¼ inches diameter. Price £1 9s. 6d. Manufacturers: — Troughton and Young, Ltd.

Publications Received

Collins' Architects' and Builders' Diary

Whatever your query you will find the answer in Collins' diary.

Your luncheon date with Aunt Agatha? Ah, Thursday, February 11th! Mustn't forget that. House drain sizes? Heat transmission terms? Non-bearing walls? Mastic asphalt? Glass enamel? Glass silk? 64 pages of information conveniently indexed and tabulated. Prices of the diary vary from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 7*s.*, and copies may be obtained from all booksellers and stationers.

● ● ●

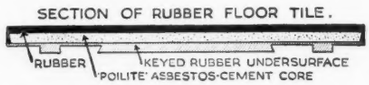
Gordon Russell

Two catalogues reach me from Gordon Russell, Ltd. The first, attractively bound in a cover of real wood veneer, deals with furniture, fabrics and fittings for the home. The second is a catalogue of furniture for schools, offices and public buildings. Both are well illustrated and give full details of sizes, prices and materials employed.

● ● ●

"Poilite" Floor Tiles

"Poilite" tiles, manufactured by Turners Asbestos Cement Company, are fully illustrated and described in a brochure recently issued by the company. Each tile, as shown in the accompanying section, consists of an asbestos-cement core, rubber faced on both sides.



The keyed rubber undersurface has been designed for fixing to a concrete sub-floor. Where the tile is to be laid on

Photograph shows some of the Pel nesting chairs which together with Pel desks were supplied to The Burlington School, Hammersmith. Pel Patented Nesting Furniture (made in England by Pel Ltd.) is the finest furniture for schools because of its springy comfort, its ability to withstand boisterous youth and the ease with which it stacks away into small space.

Architects: Sir John Burnet, Tait & Lorne.

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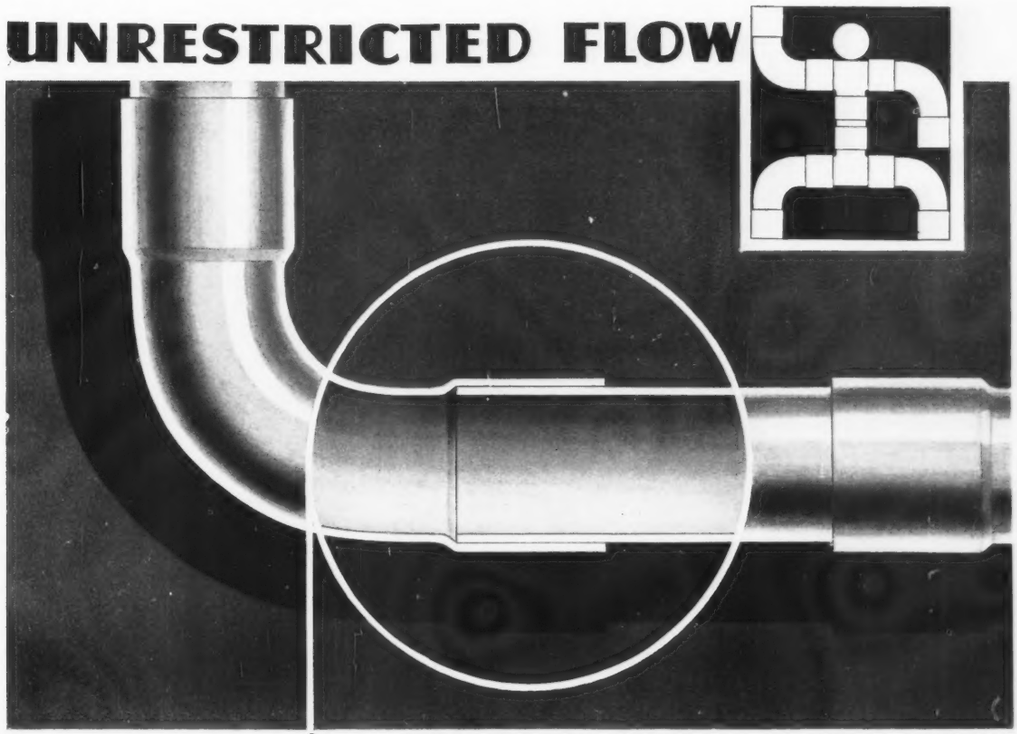

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wood sub-floors they are supplied without lugs. A number of photographs are reproduced showing "Poilite" floors in banks, cinemas, commercial buildings, swimming baths and private houses, and a colour chart is incorporated showing the standard range of colours available.

• • •

Centenary

The firm of Robert Kearsley & Company celebrate their one-hundredth birthday this year. The early history of the company tells the story of a humble beginning. Robert Kearsley, the founder, made his first varnishes in a kettle in his kitchen; a solitary varnish pot, one small furnace and one assistant was the next step. The advent of the railways in the North provided Mr. Kearsley with the opportunities for business extension that he had been hoping for, and his small company was soon supplying the railway companies with the large quantities of varnish they required. Robert Kearsley, who subsequently became Member of Parliament for the Ripon City Division, died in 1892.

The Company's works at Ripon is one of the largest of its kind in the country, and the number of well-known proprietary products now being manufactured for home consumption and export are numerous. The old kitchen kettle of 1837 has been replaced by extensive plant and machinery of the most modern design. I do hope that the trusty old kitchen utensil occupies a place of honour somewhere in the company's present offices.

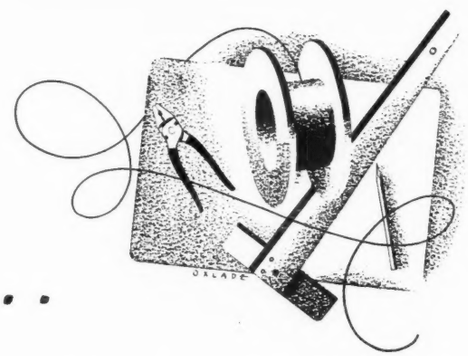
The Buildings Illustrated

Burlington School for Girls, Hammersmith.

Architects: **Sir John Burnet, Tait and Lorne.**

The general contractors were Messrs. John Laing & Son Ltd. Among the subcontractors and craftsmen were the following: Val de Travers Asphalte Paving Co. Ltd. (asphalt, roof terrace, special roofing), R. Y. Ames (bricks), Blokcrete Co. Ltd. (cast stone copings, etc.), Aston Construction Co. Ltd. (structural steel), Stourbridge Glazed Brick Co. Ltd. (tiles), Carter & Co. Ltd. (fixing of tiles), London Brick Co. Ltd. (bricks), Pilkington Bros. Ltd. (glass), Higginbotham & Co. Ltd. (fixing of glass), Stevens & Adams Ltd. (wood block flooring), Broadmead Products Co. (patent flooring), Super Cement Ltd. (waterproofing materials), Young Austen & Young Ltd. (central heating and boilers), Bratt Colbran & Co. Ltd. (stoves and grates), Benham & Son Ltd. (gas fixtures), Matthew Hall & Co. Ltd. (gas-fitting and plumbing), Troughton & Young Ltd. (electric light fixtures, telephones, and electric wiring), Oswald Hollmann (electric light fixtures), John Bolding & Sons Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Diespeker & Co. Ltd. (terrazzo stair treads), James Gibbons Ltd., and Taylor Pearse & Co. Ltd. (door furniture), Crittall Manufacturing Co. Ltd. (casements and window furniture), Eric Munday & Wm. Pickford Ltd. (gates and railings), Light Steelwork (1925) Ltd. (metalwork), Edinburgh Weavers (curtains), Alfred Brown & Co. Ltd. (cloakroom fittings), Synchronome Co. Ltd. (clocks), Davis Gas Stove Co. ("Panella" gas fires), Educational Supply Association Ltd. (3 science laboratories and folding partitions), Rippers Ltd. (wood flush doors), Celotex Co. of Gt. Britain Ltd. (acousti-celotex in Assembly Hall), Lenscrete Ltd. (balcony pavement lights), Hartley & Sugden Ltd. (Gravicoke boilers), Pel Ltd. (tubular desks, stacking chairs and special tubular furniture), Christie (Decorators) Ltd. (cement glaze dados), James Clark & Son Ltd. (mirrors and splashbacks), Gordon Russell Ltd. (librarian's desk, teachers' desks and special furniture), T. M. Gardiner Ltd. (gymnasium equipment), Finmar Ltd. and Plan Ltd. (special furniture), Heal & Son Ltd. (library chairs).

Co-operation...



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Works: TROWBRIDGE.

Junior School, King Alfred School, Hampstead.

Architect: **E. C. Kaufmann.**

The general contractors were Messrs. Leslie & Co. Ltd. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: Indented Bar & Concrete Engineering Co. Ltd. (reinforced concrete), Lenscrete Ltd. (windows in Open Hall), Hope's Heating & Lighting Ltd. (central heating), Phœnix Electrical Co. Ltd. (electric wiring and light fixtures), Alfred Goslett & Co. Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Nettlefold & Sons Ltd. (door furniture), Williams & Williams Ltd. (casements and window furniture), Thorn & Hoddle Ltd. (boot lockers, guard rails for sliding-folding doors, cloakroom fittings), Vulcanite Ltd. (special roofings).

● ● ●

Lady Bankes Council School, Ruislip.

Architects: **W. T. Curtis (Middlesex County Architect), and H. W. Burchett (Assistant Architect for Educational Buildings).**

The general contractors were Messrs. Haymills (Contractors) Ltd. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: W. Salter Edwards & Co. Ltd. (dampcourses and asphalt), Indented Bar & Concrete Engineering Co. Ltd. (reinforced concrete), Basildon Brickworks Ltd., and J. Gilham (bricks), Stuart's Granolithic Co. Ltd. (artificial stone), Field & Palmer Ltd. (bituminous roofings), Stevens & Adams Ltd. (wood block flooring), Granwood Flooring Co. Ltd. (patent flooring), Wm. Freer Ltd. (central heating), Gas Light & Coke Co. Ltd. (gasfitting), White & Mantle Ltd. (electric wiring), T. A. Harris Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Henry Hope & Sons Ltd. (casements), Educational Supply Association Ltd. (folding partitions), Tidmarsh & Sons (blinds), Eric Munday & Wm. Pickford Ltd. (metalwork), G. M. Hammer & Co. Ltd., Bennet Furnishing Co. Ltd. and Smith & Co. Ltd. (furniture), Smith's English Clocks Ltd. (clocks).

● ● ●

Kardomah Café, Piccadilly.

Architects: **Misha Black and Walter Landauer.**

The general contractors were Messrs. Frederick Sage & Co. Ltd. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: Carter & Co. Ltd. (tiles), Chance Bros. & Co. Ltd. (glass), Mortimer Gall & Co. Ltd. (electric wiring and signs), Taylor Pearse & Co. Ltd. (door furniture), Dunlop Rubber Co. Ltd. (seats upholstered in Dunlopillo), I.C.I. Rexine Ltd. (seats covered in Rexine), Bakelite Ltd. (Bakelite covering for service tables).

● ● ●

St. Monica's Church, Bootle.

Architect: **F. X. Velarde.**

The general contractors were Messrs. William Tomkinson & Sons. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: Richard Crittall & Co. Ltd. (heating), Parry's Electrical Engineers (lighting), Honeywell & Stein Ltd. (wood block floors and acoustic tiles), Bangham & Fleming Ltd. (mosaic flooring), J. & H. Patteson Ltd. (marble and mosaic), Anselm Odling & Sons (marblework), Rowe Bros. Ltd. (metal casements), Shanks & Co. Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Quiggin Bros. Ltd. (door furniture), George Lowe & Sons Ltd., and John Burden & Son (metalwork), S. G. Hill (sanctuary lamp), W. R. Burden (woodwork), Pneumatic Piling Co. Ltd. (foundations), P. Johnson (joinery), Blockleys Ltd. (bricks), Langley London Ltd. (tiles and glazed pantiles), Pilkington Bros. Ltd. (glass), H. Tyson Smith and W. L. Stevenson (sculpture).

● ● ●

Public Library, Scarborough.

Architect: **J. Paton Watson; assistant, G. W. Alderson.**

The general contractors were Messrs. Jaram & Son. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: Wright Anderson & Co. (steelwork), Hull Concrete Stone Co. Ltd. (stonework), Limmer & Trinidad Lake Asphalte Co. Ltd. (flat roofs), Kleine Co. Ltd. (reinforced concrete floors), Cork Insulation Co. Ltd. (cork flooring), Hollis Bros. & Co. Ltd. (wood block flooring), Hodkin & Jones Ltd. (terrazzo), Henry Hope & Sons Ltd. (metal windows and laylights), A. S. Toland (electrical installation), Troughton & Young Ltd. (electric

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The Airplex filter which is contained in the Filteraire delivers air 99.9% free from dust, dirt, pollen, and bacteria. In city atmospheres it is used to filter out soot and dust. Scientists use it for their germ-free rooms. Hay-fever clinics have discovered that the worst sufferers can live in comfort in a room fitted with Filteraire.

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On February 15th, 1937, the British Industries Fair is opening in London and Birmingham. Many shrewd buyers lay the foundations of a year's trading success in a week at the Fair. Buying is facilitated by the system of grouping similar products together. The BUILDING MATERIAL & EQUIPMENT Section, for example, is to be held at Castle Bromwich, Birmingham.

Copies of the catalogues of the London and Birmingham Sections of the Fair will be available as from February 8th, and may be purchased by trade buyers at a cost of 1 - each, post free, on application to the Department of Overseas Trade.

Generous travel facilities are granted by British and European Railway, Steamship and Airways Companies to visitors to the Fair from the United Kingdom and from Europe. Full information obtainable from the Department of Overseas Trade, 35 Old Queen Street, London, S.W.1, or from the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (Inc.), 95 New Street, Birmingham, 2.

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Warehouse in Nine Elms Lane for the Southern Railway.

Engineer: **Dr. Oscar Faber.**

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• • •

Shop in Wimpole Street, London.

Architects: **Ernö Goldfinger and G. W. Flower.**

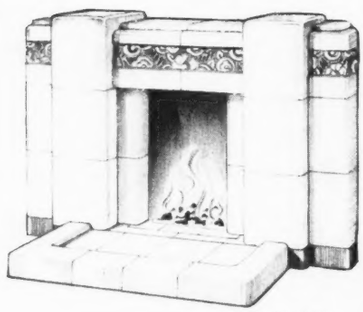
The general contractors were Messrs. Townsends (Builders) Ltd. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: Frederick Sage & Co. Ltd. (glass, shop fittings and metalwork). Dunlop Rubber Co. Ltd. (Latex patent flooring). Armstrong Cork Co. Ltd. (cork slabs, stair treads and wallpapers). Duncan Watson Ltd. (electric wiring and ventilation). General Electric Co. Ltd. (electric light fixtures). Dryad Metal Works Ltd. (door furniture). Allen Manufacturing Co. Ltd. (signs).

• • •

House in Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, London.

Architect: **R. W. Symonds.**

The general contractors were Messrs. Hoad and Taylor Ltd. Among the sub-contractors and craftsmen were the following: James Clark & Son Ltd. (decorative glass throughout). Korkoid Decorative Floors Ltd. ("Korkoid" tiling). E. A. Denyer Ltd. (central heating and plumbing). Gas Light & Coke Co. Ltd. (gas fittings). Troughton & Young Ltd. (electric wiring, heating, light fixtures and telephones). Belling & Co. Ltd., and Ferranti & Co. Ltd. (fires). Shanks & Co. Ltd. (sanitary fittings). James Gibbons Ltd. (door furniture and metalwork). Comyn Ching & Co. Ltd. (door furniture). Crittall Manufacturing Co. Ltd. (sliding window to playroom and bathroom windows). Haskins Ltd. (garage doors and fireproof doors). Frederick Tibbenham Ltd. (joinery, furniture and garden furniture). Anselm Odling & Sons Ltd. (stonework, marble and mantels). W. H. Haynes and Allan Walton (textiles). Skellorn Edwards & Co. Ltd. (furniture). A. V. Humphries Ltd. (carpets). Edinburgh Weavers Ltd. (rugs). W. H. Gaze & Sons Ltd. (shrubs and trees).



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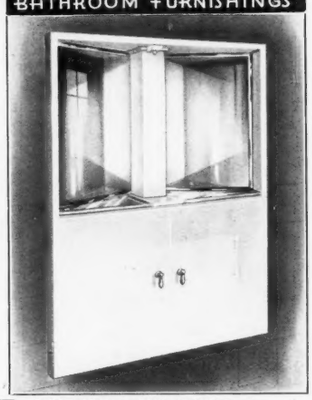

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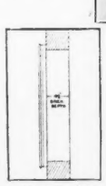

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